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Thespians Joyce Huston, Lois Labbehusen and Ross Reed in *Ever Since Eve* as staged by Shirley L. Pratt at the Webster Groves, Mo. High School (Thespians' Troupe, 1941).

VOL. XIV. No. 6

A National Publication Devoted To Dramatics in the Secondary Schools

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TO THE

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As of February 15, 1943

- ★Scitamar Dramatics Club (Troupe 497), Minerva, Ohio, High School. Donald L. Barbe, director. *Contribution to Stage Door Canteen; promotion of sales of War Stamps and Bonds.*
- ★Dramatic Association (Troupe 243), Greenwich, Conn., High School. Madge Vest, director. *Staged two patriotic assemblies; broadcast four weekly radio shows for the Victory Corps.*
- ★Thespian and Speech Class (Troupe 285), Chenoa, Ill., High School. Dorothy Wilson, instructor. *Provided speakers and leaders for Victory Corps; sale of bonds; Junior Red Cross.*
- ★Thespian Troupe 456, Litchfield, Conn., High School. Francis I. Enslin, sponsor. *Staged major production, "Young Adventure," with net proceeds given to the Stage Door Canteen Fund.*
- ★Thespian Troupe 467, Burnham High School, Sylvania, Ohio. Margaret C. Fairchild, sponsor. *Active cooperation with Victory Corps Program.*
- ★Troupe No. 520, William Penn High School, York, Pa. Leon C. Miller, sponsor. *Staged salvage drive plays; staged patriotic pageant, "Our Priceless Heritage."*
- ★Thespian Troupe 208, Welch, W. Va., High School. Eleanore E. Reed, sponsor. *Staged three one-act plays with net proceeds given to Stage Door Canteen.*
- ★Troupe No. 27, Morgantown, W. Va., High School. Dorothy Stone White, sponsor. *Staged "Out of the Frying Pan" with net proceeds given to Stage Door Canteen.*
- ★Troupe No. 59, Danville, Ill., High School. Mary Miller, sponsor. *Contributed to Stage Door Canteen Fund; participated in War-Saving Stamp Drive.*
- ★Troupe No. 55, Beaver High School, Bluefield, W. Va. Joan Lilly, sponsor. *Staged one-act play as part of patriotic program.*
- ★Dramatics Club and Troupe No. 428, Cumberland County High School, Crossville, Tenn. Ethel W. Walker, sponsor. *Contributed part of net proceeds from production of "He Who Hesitates" to Stage Door Canteen Fund.*
- ★Troupe 400, Edward Lee McClain High School, Greenfield, Ohio. Wylie Fetherlin, sponsor. *Staged "A Hero Is Born" with part of net proceeds given to Stage Door Canteen Fund; repeated performance for Red Cross benefit.*
- ★★★Drama Classes (Troupe No. 122), Newport News, Va., High School. Dorothy Crane, instructor. *Staged forty-two evening and eighty-four shows at Fort Eustis and Fort Monroe, Virginia, since October, 1941.*
- ★Troupe 53, Washington Gardner High School, Albion, Mich. Leitha V. Perkins, sponsor. *Participation in "Victory Follies of 1943"; contribution to Stage Door Canteen.*
- ★Troupe No. 177, Orlando, Fla., High School. Mildred E. Murphy, sponsor. *Staged patriotic play, "The Very Light Brigade"; contributed to Red Cross, U. S. O., Stage Door Canteen; Staged "Romance Ltd." for U. S. O.; presented patriotic radio play.*
- ★Troupe No. 83, Lemmon, S. Dak., High School. Helen Movius, sponsor. *Staged two performances of group of one-act plays with one-half of proceeds given to the war effort.*
- ★Troupe No. 532, Heflin, Ala., High School. Frances Ward, sponsor. *Presented patriotic play, "Flight For Freedom"; speakers for school's Victory Corps.*
- ★★Troupe No. 77, Garfield High School, Akron, Ohio. Alexander Wilson, sponsor. *Staged original patriotic revue, "For All The People," with three hundred in the cast. Five performances given to 10,000 people.*
- ★Troupe 133, Shenandoah, Iowa, High School. May Virden, sponsor. *Gave patriotic Poetry Recital.*
- ★Troupe 530, Mt. St. Joseph, Ohio, Academy, Sister Carita, sponsor. *Contributed to Stage Door Canteen Fund.*
- ★Troupe No. 26, Wahpeton, N. Dak., High School. Miss Lillian Syverson, sponsor. *Staged patriotic play, "American Passport." Contributed to Stage Door Canteen Fund.*
- ★Troupe No. 464, Santa Maria, Calif., Union High School. Stanley G. Breneiser, sponsor. *Staged three-act play, with net proceeds of \$100.00 given to Stage Door Canteen Fund.*

(Continued on next page)

HOW TO ENROLL AS A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE

HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE FOR VICTORY PROGRAM

Purpose: The High School Theatre For Victory Program has as its aim the mobilization of the resources and services of high school theatres everywhere in behalf of the war effort.

Participation: Participation in the High School Theatre For Victory Program is open to all high school theatre groups (dramatics clubs, classes, play production groups, etc.) which have sponsored at least one major project directly benefiting the war effort since Pearl Harbor Day (December 7, 1941). Enlistment as active contributors to the Program is purely on a *voluntary and patriotic* basis. There are no dues, fees or assessments. (Other groups, firms such as play publishers, and individuals who are rendering outstanding services in behalf of the high school theatre will also be accepted as contributors.)

Pledge: Upon enlisting as a contributor to the Program, a dramatics group is pledged to make its maximum contributions to the war effort, consistent with the best interests of the school and community.

Suggested Activities: A dramatics group may qualify as a contributor to the Program by sponsoring one or more of the following activities:

1. Stage a patriotic full-length play or evening of one-act plays.
2. Stage a patriotic pageant or a special program.
3. Produce one or more radio programs devoted to some phase of the war effort.
4. Sponsor a program for the men in service.
5. Contribute to some approved war relief cause such as the Stage Door Canteen Fund or U. S. O.
6. Provide speakers and leaders for the school's Victory Corps Program.
7. Participate in some community wartime project such as bond selling campaigns, Red Cross work, crop harvesting, etc.
8. Contribute to the pre-induction training of the boys about to enter military service.

Record: Each group enlisting as a contributor to the Program is urged to maintain a record of all major contributions to the war effort made since December 7, 1941. This record should be displayed in some conspicuous place in the school building. (An attractive "Record Certificate" for this purpose may be purchased from The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio, for the price of \$1.00.)

How to Enlist: Just write a card or letter to the National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio, stating that your dramatics group wishes to enroll as a contributor to the Program. Mention at least one major contribution your group has made to the war effort since Pearl Harbor Day.

Let's Not Forget

The High School Theatre For Victory Program is in no way meant to be a substitution for the regular dramatics program. We cannot over-emphasize the need of maintaining on a normal basis the regular school activities. We must not overlook the fact that, while we all should and must do our part to help win the war, experiences and opportunities denied our children now, will be lost to them forever. No sensible person will destroy, or eliminate even for a short time, that which has taken years to build and which is of a permanent nature, for something that is transitory and short-lived.

Certain adjustments and adaptations can and must be made in behalf of the war effort. For those of us in dramatics, that may mean, for example, that in place of the romantic comedy we planned to give this spring, we shall have to give a patriotic play. In place of the typical one-act play for our assembly program, we must give a play bearing upon some immediate wartime problem. We may even find it necessary to sponsor additional productions for this or that purpose. But, fundamentally sneaking, all that we undertake must be either a basic part of the normal program, or it is in addition to our normal activities. As one of our teachers so aptly expresses it, "What the war demands of my students and of me is *extra*, not an excuse for cancellations or substitution for any of our normal activities."

Perhaps it is more accurate to say that the *High School Theatre For Victory Program* is no program at all. Rather it is a plan whereby any project sponsored by dramatic groups in behalf of the war effort can be officially credited as a wartime contribution.

Enroll your dramatics group as a contributor to the *High School Theatre For Victory Program* on a purely voluntary and patriotic basis. It will be your way of announcing to your school and community that your group will do all within its power to help win the war on the home front. It will be your way of letting us know that, if Uncle Sam wants you to help out in some wartime problem that demands immediate attention, we may count on your active cooperation. But enroll only with the understanding that you adapt, if necessary, but in no way sacrifice, your permanent and established activities for something that is at best only of a temporary nature. Let's never forget that this war will eventually be over!

Schools Enlisted as Contributors

(Continued from page 1)

- ★Troupe No. 392, Monrovia, Calif., Arcadia-Duarte High School. Carolyn Doty, sponsor. Staged patriotic play, "American Passport."
- ★Troupe No. 187, Brownsville, Pa., Senior High School. Jean E. Donahey, sponsor. Staged four one-act plays with proceeds given to Stage Door Canteen Fund; also contributed to Red Cross and assisted with scrap metal drive.
- ★Troupe No. 78, Hot Springs, Ark., High School. Lois Alexander, sponsor. Presented "The Very Light Brigade" with net proceeds donated to Junior Red Cross and to Stage Door Canteen.
- ★Troupe No. 192, Keokuk, Iowa, High School. Franklin D. Stone, sponsor. Staged War Chest pageant in November; gave simulated radio play, "Lidice" in local theatre for war bond sales.
- ★Troupe No. 240, Lubbock, Texas, Senior High School. Mrs. Marie Gabriel, sponsor. Presented patriotic pageant, "Free Men."
- ★Seton Players—Troupe 371, Seton High School, Cincinnati, Ohio. Sister Marie Palmyre, sponsor. Staged special patriotic program; contributed to Stage Door Canteen. (To be continued in next issue)

The HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF

*The National Thespian Dramatic Honor Society
for High Schools*

COLLEGE HILL STATION, CINCINNATI, OHIO

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The High School Thespian is a national publication which aims to record and interpret in an impartial manner the most important and interesting events in the field of high school dramatics. Critical or editorial

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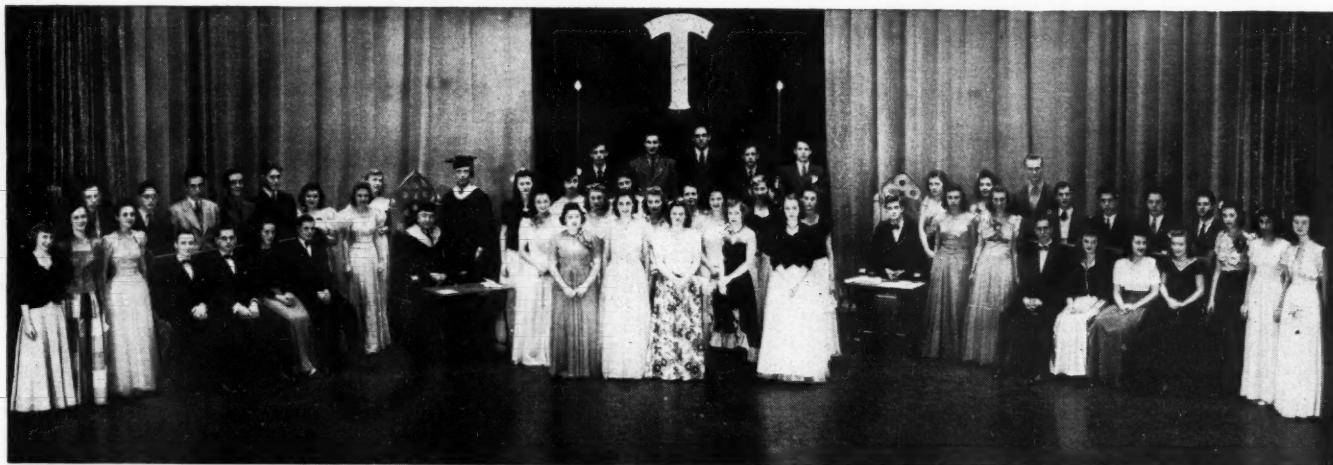
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Foreign	2.50
Single copy	.35

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The High School Thespian is published monthly (eight times) during the school year at College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio, by the National Thespian Dramatic Honor Society for High Schools, College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio. Dates of publication: Oct. 1, Nov. 1, Dec. 1, Jan. 1, Feb. 1, Mar. 1, April 1 and May 1. Mildred E. Murphy, National Director; Beulah B. Bayless, Assistant National Director; Ernest Bavely, National Secretary-Treasurer; Earl W. Blank, Senior Councilor; Paul E. Opp, Senior Councilor.
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Thespian initiation ceremony held in January at the William Penn Senior High School, York, Pa. (Thespian Troupe No. 520.)
Sponsored by Mr. Leon C. Miller.

The Art of Doing Nothing

(For Students)

by ERNA KRUCKEMEYER

Director of Dramatics and Thespian Troupe Sponsor, Hughes High School, Cincinnati, Ohio

THE most difficult task that confronts you young Thespians is that of doing nothing. For doing nothing effectively on the stage is an art. You don't believe it? Nevertheless, that is what I hope to convince you of in this paper.

Difficult Situations

I am sure you remember many times when you found yourself standing, awkwardly, twirling your thumbs and wondering what you ought to be doing while the rest of the players were saying their lines? Situations of this kind divide themselves into distinct categories. First, there are times when as a minor character, you are compelled to listen to the eloquence of the hero of the play. A good example of this occurs in *Cyrano* when that Knight of the Big Nose is holding forth in Act I, Scene 1, to the contemptible little lordling, Valvert, who has just said in his most high-and-mighty way,

"Your nose—ahem—your nose is rather large."

Whereupon, *Cyrano*, wounded to the quick, for he was very sensitive about that big nose of his, launches off on one of the most famous speeches in dramatic literature, a speech about a page and a half long, leaving the antagonist nothing to do but listen. Second, there are situations when the other characters have the stage; when you, although on, and necessarily, have no lines for some time. Third, you may be merely a member of a group, even of a mob. Did you ever realize that as such, you were almost as important as the lead?

That Awkward Feeling

Before you call in a doctor, you have plenty of evidence that you need him. He

finds out the symptoms and advises a cure. Now what are the symptoms in the process of learning to act that prove to us that we need advice? It is that awkward feeling that I have described above; now the moment you feel that you just don't know what to do, the very second you find yourself waiting for the other fellow to stop talking and to give you a chance, take my word for it, something is seriously wrong. The first time you find yourself in this position, you need help; the second, you should find a way out for yourself.

A Good Listener

Have you ever heard it said that a good listener is just as important as a good conversationalist? This is true in every phase of life. Certainly it is true in social and business intercourse. Moreover, if you wish to succeed as an actor, you will culti-

vate the habit of listening on the stage. Some years ago, a veteran of the American stage, William Gillette, stressed this point. He said no matter how often you had heard a line—and in the days of the troupers this was *very* often—you must listen as though you were hearing it for the first time. If you do this, your face and your body will react naturally. The trouble with you young actors is, I think, that while you are being addressed at length, you do *not* listen, but keep agonizing, "What shall I do?" Instead, you should be doing your utmost to capture the right mood and then concentrate, i.e. listen as though you had never heard the words before. If you do this, your mind will do the rest—almost. I add "almost" because, while listening, you must be sure of several things; first, that you have an intelligent grasp of the character you are portraying; second, that you understand thoroughly the words that are spoken; third, you must realize your relation to the character that is speaking. If this is the case, your reactions will be natural and effective and you will again have proved the truth of the principle that pantomime precedes speech, for your face and movement will show what you are thinking before you utter a word.

If you wish to try out the truth of this statement, look up the famous nose speech of *Cyrano*. Other speeches equally as good for practice are *Cyrano*, Act II, beginning "What would you have me do?"; *Petruchio's* long speech when he first sees *Katharine* in Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*; *Clarissa's* speech to *Charles* after his strange proposal in *Disraeli*, or the grandmother's long speech in that charming Spanish comedy by *Sierra*, *The Romantic Young Lady*. Dramatic literature, plays of all kind, abound in such situations and therefore it is very important that you learn how to deal with such passages. And it is not as easy as it seems, for before we leave this particular theme, I must

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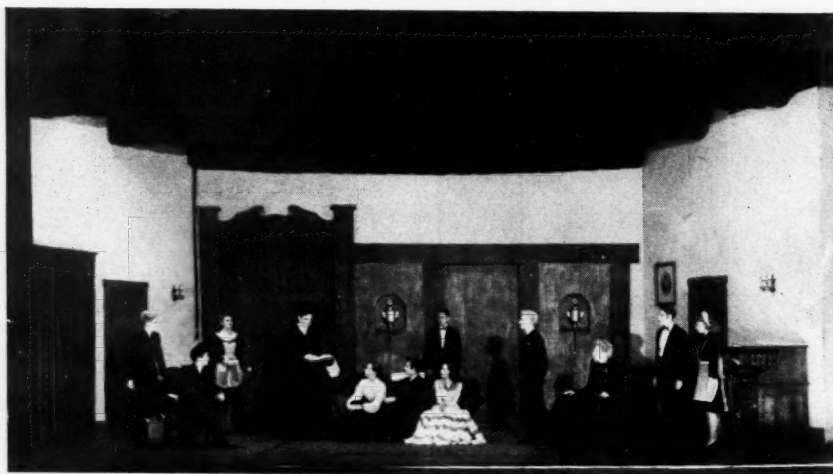
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Scene from Elizabeth McFadden's popular play, *Double Door*, as produced by Troupe No. 480 at the Idaho Falls, Idaho, High School, with Mr. Elmer S. Crowley as director.

warn you, for after you have listened to these particular lines during long rehearsals, it becomes increasingly difficult to give the illusion of hearing them for the first time. *You can't trust entirely to natural reaction.* Your response should become, to a certain extent, at least, a matter of technique, broad, of course, but carefully planned. There may be variations, but in this connection it is very important to remember that the slightest wrong movement of the hand or head may mar the whole scene. And above all, before you attempt any reaction at all, you must do your utmost to recapture the mood of the scene.

Those Other Awkward Moments

Now let us consider the second situation. You come in, have a line, and then the other characters have the stage. We had an example of that just the other day in a little one-act comedy, *Sugar and Spice*. Father comes in, has a line, and then stands and waits.

"Don't you feel awkward standing there, Father?" I asked.

"Yes"

"Well," I said, "Find something to do".

And he did. He went over to a table, found his pipe, and began filling it with tobacco. But this is not as simple as it sounds, for in such a situation you must keep a number of things in mind. First, you must have some reason for your movement from the door to the table; second, you must not disturb the balance of the stage picture; third, you must be careful that at such a time when you are unimportant, you do not take a position of importance and thus disturb the stage balance. Even a stage picture is less important than the last. In this connection I am tempted to tell you a story I heard a student of the great Stanislavsky tell. One day a group of students were discussing with the great Russian actor what really was the most important position on stage. They argued as only Russians can

and reached no conclusion. In the midst of the discussion Stanislavsky left. In a few moments he returned and took his stand quietly in the most obscure corner of the stage. Immediately all talking ceased and every eye was turned in his direction. The problem was solved. In this case the emphasis depended, not on the position, but on the reaction of the *seemingly unimportant* members of the cast.

In this connection Louis Calvert tells a good story, too. A star had an eloquent speech to make. It went over "big".

"Well", said he, to the so-called unimportant fellow, the *listener*, "that was a fine round of applause I got tonight".

"Yes", replied the underling quietly, "we did get a good one".

"We? You flatter yourself. You don't think you had anything to do with it, do you?"

At the next performance the little man took his revenge. He remained impassive, perfectly still. There was hardly any applause and the star was forced to admit the importance of good listening and the consequent effective reaction.

Just a Member of a Mob

The last situation is when you find yourself merely one of a group or even of a mob. Even then the individual is important. An actor *must always be an individual no matter how small his part*. Someone has said that it is the small, silent things that proves him an artist. As the small, almost unheeded facial expressions and bits of business prove the great actor, so the carefully planned reactions of a mere walk-on make a great production. Don't ever forget that. There are a number of great scenes that you may use to work out the truth of this theory. One is in *The Admirable Crichton*, Act I, where Lord Loam is making his annual speech to his domestics. Lord Loam could never put over that speech without the help of Tweeny or even the stable boy. Again in *Cyrano*, Act II, when Cyrano is telling his

Gascony cadets the story of his escapade at the Port de Nesle, every single cadet is as important as Cyrano's chief antagonist, Christian, or even Cyrano himself. Another thrilling example is the great speech of young Henry V. to his soldiers just before the battle of Agincourt. He begins,

"Once more into the breach, dear friends,
once more,
Or close the wall up with our English
dead."

The effectiveness of the speech depends somewhat, of course, on the sincerity and vigor the young actor puts into it. But the thing that really brings it to life and gives the audience its greatest thrill is the reaction of the group. When the young king begins speaking the yeomen are lying on the ground to one side, resting, their battle axes beside them. The nobles are on the other side, standing in groups, their swords sheathed. As the King continues, one by one the yeomen rise to their feet, raise their battle axes; the soldiers stand at attention. And now it is not so much the speech of Henry V. as the response of every yeoman, the spirit with which every noble draws his sword so that at the end of the passage with the line, "God for Harry—England—and St. George!", all swords and battle axes are raised high, and a valiant group of British soldiers, each one an individual, shout

"God for Harry—England—and St.
George!"

The whole becomes a living thing and the applause that follows is not only for the King, but for every humble yeoman in the group.

One More Thing

Just one more thing. You must not only give the impression of *hearing* the speech for the first time, but of *responding* for the first time. I am sure you all have memories of a weary voice, "Pick up your cues, *please*". Now you have planned a delightful bit of reaction. Every good actor does. You feel that you just *must* work that in. And you say to yourself, "It won't do to make my answer too glib". Right—but in this connection please remember that pantomime should be in progress *while listening*. This is really the test of good listening. In other words, you should give the impression of thinking out your answer while listening and then, except in cases of overpowering emotion when no words are necessary, actions speak louder than words. It is really not a matter of cues but of listening effectively.

In conclusion, I hope this article has made clear that it is the little things that count in acting as they do in life. A great many of you could, I am sure, rise to a great occasion, make a great speech in the theatre; do a heroic deed in life in time of crisis. But to work patiently, perseveringly, and intelligently on small details that may never bring recognition, takes a great actor, a great person.

Selling Dramatics to Our School and Community

by MARION STUART

Director of Dramatics and Thespian Troupe Sponsor, Champaign Senior High School, Champaign, Ill.

Program

THE dramatics program at the Champaign Senior High School is designed to include both curricular and extra-curricular activities. There is a beginning course in dramatics which is designed to introduce the pupils to the world of the theatre. It is a combined course of the materials of stage history, theory and acting. There is a vocational laboratory course in stage technique and its application which is called Play Production. Other courses include Advanced Acting and Radio Production. This latter unit carries a thirty-minute weekly broadcast over the local radio station.

The extra-curricular dramatics program is directed by the two drama clubs of the school, Wig and Paint, and the National Thespians. Membership in the National Thespian troupe is honorary, open to second semester juniors and seniors and carrying a four-point scholastic average.

Years ago, Champaign abandoned the junior and senior class plays and gave such production time to the Dramatics Department. As a result of this move, all dramatic productions are open to all of the students of the school, irrespective of their class standing. However, students working on the plays must maintain the same scholastic standing as the athletes of the school. Seniority rights are observed in casting the plays and in assigning managerships and chairmanships on the production staffs. Usually one or two sophomores earn a position in the cast of the play and many serve on the production committees.

The Dramatics Department is controlled by a Dramatics Board. Faculty membership on this Board is appointed by the principal of the school and remains a permanent standing committee. The dramatics sponsor serves as the chairman of this Board. Other faculty members include a representative of the Administrative Department, the vice-principal, the director of the Art Department, a member of the English Department, and the faculty business manager, who is a member of the French Department. Student members of the Board include the president and treasurer of the dramatics club, Wig and Paint, and the president and treasurer of the National Thespians. The meetings for the Dramatics Board are called by the chairman. All of the plays for the dramatic program are chosen by the Board by two means, either by consultation with the vice-principal directly, or by approval of the entire Board.

This is the fourth in a series of articles on "selling dramatics to the school and community." Directors interested in submitting accounts describing the organization and operation of their dramatics program are urged to write us for further instructions.—Editor.

Three major productions are scheduled for the year: fall, mid-winter and spring. A major production is a three-act play or longer and scheduled for a night performance. In addition to these longer plays, two stunt shows, one each semester, are scheduled, also four one-act plays for the assembly and a special Christmas program. Supplementary class and club plays are studied, but they are not produced for the public unless they show unusual merit.

Talent Bureau

FOR the past three years the Dramatics Department has sponsored a special service for the school and the community. This service has been called the "Talent Bureau." At the beginning of the fall semester those students who are interested fill out a printed form which lists their names, addresses, telephone numbers, class standings, home rooms and their special talents, such as singing, dancing, readings, travel talks, book reviews and the like. These cards are filed and the students appear before a student committee of senior club members to present their talents. If they are meritable they are approved and transferred to the talent file. If the performance needs correcting, student criticisms are given and the student is given another trial appearance before the committee.

Home-room program chairmen may consult this file and select a speaker or entertainer for their individual programs. They give their choice to the student talent chairman, who maintains office hours twice a week in the dramatics room. This chairman notifies the student of the home-room chairman's request, the room number, time of performance and type of program requested. In addition to this, the student Talent Bureau director issues the permit slip which excuses the student from his own home-room and passes him to the guest home-room. Then the student director files a record of each performance on the back of the student's card, marking the date, material and home room before which this student has appeared.

This is the third year for the Talent Bureau and many program chairmen from the various clubs throughout the commu-

ity are using it for their planned programs when they want high school talent. The Dramatics Department feels that this is a very valuable service to our school and its community.

Working Facilities

WORKING facilities for the Dramatics Department are good. There is a large workroom in the rear of the auditorium. This workroom is well lighted and well ventilated and has available a scenery cabinet constructed with wooden rails to prevent the flats from warping and to provide easy storage space for the flats. There is sufficient wall space to store stair and step units. This room lies directly behind the auditorium stage.

To the left of the auditorium is the light room, which has the switchboard, dimmer bank, and steel cabinet for storing additional bulbs, small spotlights, gels and miscellaneous lighting equipment and tools. There is also space in this room to store the standing electrical equipment such as the large spotlights, flood lamps and individual box lights.

To the right of the auditorium is another room, which has built-in wooden shelves reaching from the floor to the ceiling, which are used for storing boxes of costumes and materials, small hand properties, scene painting equipment. In addition to these shelves, there is a hanging costume rack for the nicer costumes, a series of four steel locker cabinets for properties, sewing equipment and articles which are easily lost or misplaced. A fire extinguisher is kept in this room, and new material is fireproofed as it is used. The stage rug and curtains are also stored in this room.

Finances

THE Dramatics Department is financed by two sources. The School Board establishes a yearly fund for the purchasing of permanent equipment such as electrical supplies, stage curtains, storage cabinets and ground cloths. Some years, in place of buying new equipment, this money is spent on re-arranging the old equipment. For example, one year the first border of stage lights was taken down and a row of nine spotlights was installed on the old border position. Last year attention was centered in the auditorium. Two overhead spotlights were installed in the ceiling in order to light the front of the stage. Four spotlight outlets were added to the balcony of the auditorium and new control of this lighting equipment was wired into the light room to the left of the stage.

We planned to purchase broadcasting equipment this year, which would have permitted us to send the high school broadcasts directly from the school auditorium to the local station. Due to the war, it was impossible to secure the needed materials. We shall look forward to this addition at a later time.

The second source of income is from the



Players in the play, *Just Like Cinderella*, as given by Troupe No. 215 at the Stambaugh, Mich., High School. A scene from Act II is shown here. Directed by Miss Helen Dunham.

plays themselves. The Dramatics Department is expected to pay for all of the expenses which are incurred in producing each play, as well as to contribute 5% of the net profits of the play to the general activity fund of the high school. All play money, as well as all other school funds, is handled (banked and requisitioned) by this general school fund. Student chairmen (treasurers) make a monthly financial report to the school bank director. The money which remains is used for operating expenses, play collections for the school library, play books, and additional dramatics equipment. The money which is spent in building up the costume department is earned by the dramatics club by means of its plays produced.

Community Demands

THE demands of the community on the dramatic program are slightly different in this community than in most others. There are three high schools, two junior high schools and the University of Illinois constantly supplying programs for this community. Standards in entertainment are high. Budgeting of time becomes an art. So that the success, in financial terms, of each production depends upon three things: reputation built on former productions, the date of the production and the importance of conflicting interests, and the choice of the play for the current production. Particularly in this community the name of the play and its former popularity means a great deal to its local reception. The night the high school produced *Dark Victory* the house was sold out. *Romeo and Juliet* played to a capacity house. The house was filled for *Letters to Lucerne*. But the night the high school played a good high school comedy which had an unknown title there were approximately six hundred empty seats in the auditorium.

In our community the choice of the play is the most important factor. The

play, in order to justify the amount of time spent in its production, must be one which will be stimulating to the director, the cast, and the audience. The play must be challenging to the director in order to demand her best work, for there is a direct ratio between the director's enthusiasm and that of the cast and staff. When a cast talks about a show the audience comes to the auditorium expecting a good play. One person's enthusiasm is caught by another and before you realize what is happening the play is named a success. It is a vicious circle-enthusiasm and interest growing on enthusiasm and interest. It has its feeble beginning in a satisfactory choice of play.

Three-Year Cycle

OUR dramatic program is planned on a three year cycle. Within that time, we try to have a children's play, a comedy, a drama, a Shakespearean production, a mystery play or a thriller, a modern play, a costume production other than an Elizabethan one, a farce, and sometimes a melodrama. Once in a great while we do a fantasy. If the Dramatic Board finds a particularly good play of a type which has already been given, and the students are eager to produce it, we select it in preference to a new play of another type. If we find a student-written play that merits a public production we add it to our major play program.

Since the Champaign schools are planned on the 6-3-3 basis, the Dramatic Board feels that during the course of a student's career in the high school he will be given the opportunity to study and experience many of the types of dramas. Students and adults in the community who support the dramatic program grow bored if they are subjected to a steady diet of just one type of a show.

Business and Publicity

THE business manager and the publicity and ticket committee are always an important part of the production. A

student manager is selected for each show and is directly responsible to the faculty business manager. Publicity devices are always used to keep the name and the date of the play before the community. Special assemblies, handbills, posters, announcements, previews, movies, broadcasts (when such permission can be secured from the publisher) special letters, news stories, mailing lists, special events such as model sets, costume doll displays, senior pictures, candid camera shots taken during rehearsals, all, are used either alone or in combination. The object of the publicity committee is to keep the school talking about the play. One committee purchased an order of buttons which read: "Get One." These were distributed to the cast, publicity and ticket committees. They were worn on the day the ticket campaign was started. As soon as a student presented his ticket to the play he received a button reading, "I've got one."

The student publicity committee usually meets four weeks before the production date. They plan their campaign, get the materials, and with the ticket committee concentrate their drive into the last two weeks of the show. Both committees work together, building student interest in the show right through the day of the performance. The success of the show then rests on the cast and the production staff. They must satisfy the audience and make them eager to return to the next production. Satisfied customers, talking about the good time they enjoyed, do much in convincing other students that they must make a special effort to attend the next production.

Community Interest

THIS community has always been one which has been interested in a dramatic program, providing it promises to be entertaining. This interest is shown irrespective of the type of program offered: serious, comic, tragic, mysterious. A

The Weavers and the Cherry Orchard

The Fifth in a series of articles on Great Plays of All Times

by BARNARD HEWITT

(Primarily for Students)

Chairman, Dramatics Committee, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Becker: A real thoroughbred manufacturer will get the better of two or three hundred weavers in the time it takes you to turn 'round—swallow them up, and not leave as much as a bone. He's got four stomachs like a cow, and teeth like a wolf. . . .

Dreissiger: That man gets no more work from us. Becker: It's all the same to me whether I starve at my loom or by the roadside.

(The Weavers, Act I, tr. by Mary Morrison, copyright Wm. Heinemann, Ltd.)

THE WEAVERS

WHEN Gerhart Hauptmann wrote *The Weavers* in 1892, it was recognized at once as a revolutionary play. The Deutsches Theater would have none of it, and it owed its initial production to a group of semi-professionals called the *Freie Bühne* (Free Theatre) under the direction of Otto Brahm. The events which Hauptmann dramatized in *The Weavers* took place before Hauptmann was born, but his grandfather had been a poor weaver like those in the play, so that he viewed those events with strong personal feeling. Moreover, the play breathed the social democratic spirit, which was rising to champion the common people, slaves no longer of kings but of the economic system.

Although a great deal of water has flowed under the bridge since 1892 and more since 1840, the economic system of most of the world has not changed, and conditions such as Hauptmann's weavers suffered, have remained with us. A few years ago economic depression lay like a blight on most of the world, but no contemporary playwright succeeded so well as Hauptmann did forty years earlier in dramatizing the plight of masses of people suffering through no fault of their own

Champaign High School has been fortunate in that the school officials are interested in the dramatic program. The School Board appropriates money for its support in equipment, and attends all of the productions of the Dramatic Department.

Student enthusiasm is inherited from relatives, brothers, sisters or cousins to such a degree that the majority of pupils coming into the school enter with a desire of becoming members of either or both of the dramatic clubs. Dramatics in Champaign Senior High School has always been such fun that labor which goes into a performance is forgotten. Students often say on the night of the performance almost simultaneous with the closing of the last curtain: "When does the next show start?" And I must confess that during the last act I, too, find myself thinking of the "next" show.

and blindly rebelling against the intolerable conditions of their life. This should be remembered in Hauptmann's favor by those who are inclined to deal harshly with him for his capitulation in extreme old age to Hitler and the Nazi tyranny.

The Weavers was revolutionary in form as well as in content. The cast of characters names forty people, not including twenty-five or thirty extras. And although some characters are more important than others, the play has no "leads" in the ordinary sense. The protagonist, the hero of the play is a group, the whole mass of weavers; they suffer and rise in rebellion, not so much against Dreissiger, the particular manufacturer, as against the system which makes their lives not worth living. Dreissiger appears in only two of the five acts, and although Becker and Jaeger are the leaders of the revolt, they do not dominate more than brief scenes. Each of the five acts gives us an entirely new setting, and (shades of the dramatic "rules"!) an almost completely new set of characters.

Act I takes place in the pay-off room of Dreissiger's establishment, where the weavers are lined up to turn in their finished work. Here we are given instance after instance of the sufferings of the weavers and of the utter callousness of Dreissiger and his underlings. This callousness is the result not of any excess of cruelty or inhumanity in the manufacturer but rather from a blindness, a lack of understanding, which arises from his own need to make a profit. The spirit of rebellion shows itself at the end of the act, when Becker, a weaver younger and more vigorous than most of his fellows defies Dreissiger. Act II takes us into the home of old Baumert, where poverty has produced conditions like those of our time described by John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Jaeger, a weaver's son who has just served a term in the army, is appalled at the plight of the weavers. Filled with youthful energy and high spirits he is all for action against the oppressors. In Act III we see the tavern, where we meet various characters whose interests lie with the manufacturing class, and other discontented individuals, like Wittig, the smith, who are easily drawn into the weavers' movement of rebellion. As the act ends, we see the movement gain direction and momentum. Act IV shows us Dreissiger at home. There the battle is joined between the manufacturer, supported by the pastor and the chief of police, and

the weavers led by Becker and Jaeger. Dreissiger and his family flee, leaving the house to be pillaged by the weavers. The last act takes us to the hut of old Hilse, a weaver, who hopes for happiness in the next world, and believes that it is his duty to suffer patiently in this. The rebel weavers sweep past his door on their way to smash the weaving machines in the next town, call in vain on him to join them, and then dash on to meet the soldiers who have been called out by the authorities. The soldiers fire, and old Hilse doggedly weaving at his window, is killed by a stray bullet. The curtain falls as the weavers drive the troops back.

Although the play ends with the weavers apparently victorious, it is clear that Hauptmann is not advocating revolution, at any rate not revolution by violence. He makes it perfectly clear that the victory is only temporary. More troops will come, the rebellion will be put down, and the weavers will be no better off than they were before. He makes it clear also that the weavers are as much victims of their own ignorance as they are of the greed of others. They do not understand the causes of their suffering, and consequently their revolt is doomed to failure. The play is emotionally biased (Hauptmann's sympathy is all with the weavers), but it clearly states through Dreissiger the case for the manufacturers, themselves caught in a system they cannot control.

Even to read, *The Weavers* is an exciting play. In spite of the larger number of characters and the lack of a conventionally constructed plot, Hauptmann manages to build each act to a high peak of emotion. It is unfortunate that the size of the cast and the social content have discouraged production of this really remarkable play. *The Weavers* must be a tremendous experience in the theatre.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD

Trophimov: . . . I feel the approach of happiness, Anya; I see it coming . . .
Anya (pensively): The moon is rising.
Trophimov: Yes, the moon is rising. (A pause) There it is, there is happiness; it is coming towards us, nearer and nearer; I can hear the sound of its footsteps . . . And if we do not see it, if we do not know it, what does it matter? Others will see it.
(The Cherry Orchard, Act II, tr. by George Calderon. Copyright by Mitchell Kennerley.)

THE premiere of *The Cherry Orchard* at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1904 was an occasion. Chekhov's name day had been chosen for the event, and his many friends and admirers crowded the theatre to welcome a new play by a writer whose fame was beginning to grow. Although *The Cherry Orchard* proved to be Chekhov's finest play and he was given a tremendous ovation, the occasion was not entirely a happy one. Chekhov was so ill that he could hardly stand the strain even of a triumph, and his friends were fearful for him. A little less than seven months later Chekhov died, before his last play had achieved the popular success for which it was destined. After the first night, receipts fell off, and as was the case with Chekhov's other plays, *The Sea-*



Stage setting for the production of *The Very Light Brigade* at the Benton Harbor, Mich., High School. (Thespian Troupe No. 455.) Miss Margaret L. Meyn, director.

gull, *Uncle Vanya*, and *The Three Sisters*, an audience had to be built for it, so to speak. Only much later did it become one of the main-stays of the Art Theatre.

The reasons for this are obvious when one reads the play. The first time, one is likely to say: "This is not a play at all!", for Chekhov has used none of the familiar dramatic devices. The play has no plot in the ordinary sense of that word. At the beginning we learn that the Ranevsky estate with its cherry orchard is to be sold at auction to satisfy the debts. In the end it is sold and the household broken up, without anyone's having lifted a finger to prevent it. The incidents of the play, instead of being put together in the customary cause and effect relationship, seem to have been shuffled together by chance exactly like most incidents in life. The play has no hero and no heroine. There is no clearly defined conflict such as that between the weavers and the capitalist class in Hauptmann's play. *The Cherry Orchard* does not even have a rising tide of violent emotion such as gives dramatic power to the equally plotless *Weavers*.

It may take several readings before one becomes conscious that the subject of the play is not simply the sale of the cherry orchard, or even the breaking up of the Ranevsky household, but rather the disintegration of a social class and the destruction of an entire way of life. The cherry orchard, to which Madame Ranevsky and Gaev cling so pathetically, is no longer good for anything. It bears only every two years, and even then there is no market for its cherries. And so it is with the society which Chekhov represents. It is dying and must be cut away to make room for new life.

Every character in the play is to some extent representative of this dying society. Some, like Madame Ranevsky, Gaev, and especially the aged Firs, live almost wholly in the past. Trophimof looks ahead to the new life but the dead hand of the past is on him, he can do nothing but talk about regeneration. Lopakhin has been caught up without his own volition and becomes one of the agents

of change, but serfdom is too close behind him, he cannot see where he is going.

Chekhov is picturing a period of decadence, but he understands that in such a period there is not only the crumbling of the old but also the germinating of the new. *The Cherry Orchard* looks forward as well as backward. As soon as one realizes that in this play every incident, however trivial, however accidental it may seem, has been carefully selected to illustrate some aspect of this process of decay and growth, the form of the play emerges, not the old, hackneyed form of dramatic conflict leading to action, but a fresh form in which little incidents are subtly woven together to produce an effect which, if it is not dramatic in the ordinary way, yet can enthrall an audience in the theatre.

In the absence of the ordinary tension growing out of plot, we must look elsewhere for the source of *The Cherry Orchard's* dramatic effectiveness. It probably lies in the overwhelming feeling of sympathy which Chekhov succeeds in creating for his characters. One and all they are helpless in one way or another in the face of the demands made by a changing society. Madame Ranevsky is bankrupt, but she continues to squander money. Gaev understands that the estate will be sold, but cannot do the one thing that would prevent the sale. Trophimof is full of hope for the future, but at thirty he is still a student. Lopakhin has made a lot of money, but although he loves Barbara, and she loves him and gives him every opportunity, he cannot somehow ever propose to her. In the hands of another writer, such material might have become bitter satire expressed perhaps in terms of broad farce, but not in Chekhov's. He does not seem to spare his characters; their faults do not escape him. And yet

obviously Chekhov loves everyone of them, even Ephikhodof of the twenty-two misfortunes and the scamp Yasha, from the very bottom of his heart. He laughs at them and we laugh with him, but often like Chekhov we laugh through our tears.

The more familiar one becomes with *The Cherry Orchard*, the more one becomes conscious of an effect not unlike the effect of a piece of music. This is due in part to the important part played by incidental music and by sound effects, not only the sound of chopping in the last act, and the unexplained sound "as of a string breaking far away" which we hear in Act II and again just before the final curtain, but also Ephikhodof playing his guitar, the village band at the party, the birds singing in the garden, the carriage arriving and departing. It is due even more, however, to the composition of the longer speeches and to the entire handling of the dialogue. It is as if the whole play were orchestrated to produce certain effects upon the ear, effects which express a deep love for all human beings.

Although each character is fully and richly drawn, this is not a play for any group of actors, no matter how competent they may have proved as individuals in the more conventional type of play. Stanislavski has described in *My Life In Art* how long and hard he and his colleagues of the Moscow Art Theatre worked before they discovered and perfected a style of acting suitable to Chekhov's plays. They succeeded, and they have their reward, for their fame rests largely on that achievement. Not only does *The Cherry Orchard* require a wholly natural, undramatic style of acting, rich in suggestion, but it requires also, if its symphonic character is not to be lost, a cooperative spirit and kind of ensemble playing which is very rare. Although some great actors have played in *The Cherry Orchard* (Olga Knipper, Chekhov's wife, created the role of Madame Ranevsky, Edith Evans played it in England, and Nazimova in America), the play remains a group play, best projected not by stars, but by a company of good actors used to working together.

Uncle Sam Hates Inertia

An enemy of Uncle Sam on the home front is "Inertia". To beat this deadly foe, get into action now! Tomorrow may be too late! Enlist your school today as a contributor to the HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE FOR VICTORY PROGRAM. See page 1 for details.

Religious Drama for the High School

(PART TWO)

by PAUL NAGY, JR.

Drama Editor, *The Messenger* (weekly organ of *The Evangelical and Reformed Church*),
Playwright and Author, Mountville, Pa.

Easter Drama

SOMEWHERE along the eighth or ninth centuries, Easter drama was born in the Church as part of the regular service. It represented the going of the Three Marys to the Tomb of Jesus and was called *Quem Quaeritis?* (*Whom Seek Ye?*) Strangely enough, the subject has not lent itself so readily to dramatic treatment as the Christmas episodes have. It is more difficult perhaps to grasp the significance of the Resurrection than the birth of the Christ Child, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Arrival of the Magi. Of course, many plays have been written about life after death and the problem of immortality which would definitely tie in with Easter, but we'd be traveling far off the main line if we should attempt to include them in our present survey. We must be content with some plays* which tell of the Passion Week and which dramatize the Easter Story.

Passion Week

El Cristo, by Margaret Larkin, is rather difficult but impressive, as it tells of the Penitentes of New Mexico, dramatizing the crucifixion of the spirit. *Good Friday*, by John Masefield, is also difficult, but one of the most profoundly beautiful plays for this season. *In the Shadow of the Cross*, by Irene Fuller, has a series of parallels between Biblical scenes and modern situations. Thought-provoking! *Release*, by Dorothy Clarke Wilson, tells of Barrabas' remorse, deliverance and consecration. You will find a masterpiece in Charles Rann Kennedy's *The Terrible Meek*. Played in the darkness. The time is the night following the Crucifixion. Another drama of deep spiritual quality is E. W. Bates' *The Two Thieves*. If you have an ambitious, serious, hard-working group, try your hand at Masefield's *The Trial of Jesus* and *Pilate and the Cross*, by J. J. Glade.

Easter

Why Weepst Thou? by William Duncan, is one of those stirring pieces that will comfort as it tells the story of Joseph of Arimathea. *On the Third Day*, by Belford Forest, is a long, three-act play telling the story of the first Easter Day. *Thy Son Liveth*, by Maryann Manly, has always been one of my favorites because it deals with the subject of death and

immortality so touchingly and intelligently. *The Road to Emmaus*, by Paul Nagy, Jr., describes the experiences of the two disciples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus but did not recognize him. *The Boy Who Discovered Easter*, by E. McFadden, is a modern treatment that you will like.

General Biblical Plays

In addition to the special seasonal plays such as those for Christmas and Easter, there are many general Biblical plays which deserve production.

One-acts

The Burden Bearers, by D. C. Wilson, one of our most prolific writers of Biblical and religious plays. In this one she strikes at racial discrimination which Simon (the Cyrenian who was forced to carry Jesus' Cross) suffered. Dorothy Elderdice depicts Paul in a Roman prison prior to his execution in the moving play, *Demas*. *Dramatic Bible Readings* will give you an opportunity for mono-dramatic presentations. A more difficult one-acter is *First Corinthians*, by H. F. Rubinstein, which analyzes Paul's *First Letter to the Corinthians*. *He Passed Through Samaria*, by L. Bullock-Webster, shows the influence Jesus had on two thieves who were planning to

steal the Judean tax money. You ought also to consider *The Prodigal and the Shepherd*, by E. W. Bates, who writes the kind of plays of which we have too few.

Three-acts

Now we come to the longer plays where the high school can especially contribute something real and lasting. These require larger casts and more complete equipment. *At the Well of Bethlehem*, by Mona Swann, is a narrative drama in three acts based on the *King James Version*. Choric speech, by the way. *Family Portrait*, by Coffee and Cowen, has received many school presentations and ought to be done more and more frequently. It is the life of Jesus seen through the eyes of Mary, his mother, and her family. *The Eternal Road*, by Franz Werfel, is one of those dramas that should be produced despite its large cast and difficult setting. Perhaps some more venturesome group can adapt it to their own stage. *The Boy David*, by J. M. Barrie, merits your attention. Likewise, Anderson's *Journey to Jerusalem*, which tells of the twelve-year-old Jesus and his awakening to his Messiahship.

Religious Plays

Blood of the Martyrs, by Percival Wilde, tells the self-sacrifice of an aged scientist who is commanded by a tyrannical government to prove its theories by science. *The Captains and the Kings*, by Channing Pollock, is a challenging portrayal of the true King who is to rule by love and in simplicity, without the pomp and glory of the military. *Confessional*, again by Wilde, describes the mental and spiritual anguish of Robert Baldwin, who is suspected of embezzlement. In *The Doctor Decides*, Fred Eastman takes us to the southern mountains to show us the trials and difficulties of a medical missionary. Good characterizations! *Larry*, by



Rehearsal scene from the original Christmas play, *Dark Mirror*, at the Wyandotte, Mich., High School. Written by Carl S. Hardwicke, sponsor for Troupe No. 50.

*Unless otherwise stated, the plays mentioned in this survey are published by Baker Co.

Army Command

Every soldier in Uncle Sam's Army knows the meaning of the command, "Fall In". Every dramatics director in the nation's high schools is now being urged to "Fall in" for duty on the home front. Get into action. Enlist your Dramatics Department today in the High School Theatre For Victory Program. For particulars see page 1.

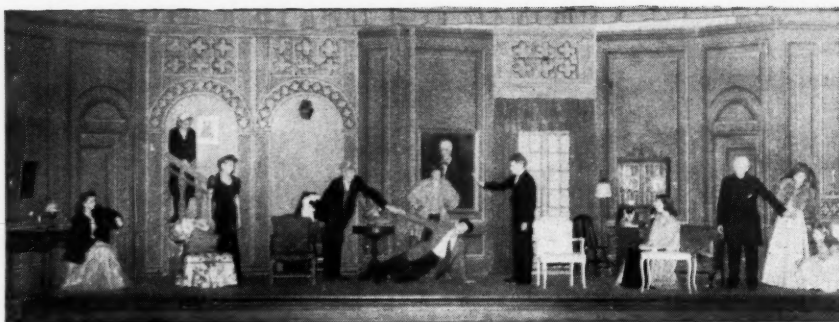
Robert S. Illingsworth, sketches the college life of this young man and shows how he stood up for his convictions. Wholesome! *The Least of These*, by V. W. Elicker, is a dramatization for a Speaking Chorus, which describes strikingly the difference between the HAVES and the HAVE NOTS. *The Madman and the Wrecking Crew*, by Florence Converse, is written specifically for Holy Cross Day, but is appropriate at any time. Plenty of meat in this Morality Play. *Modern Religious Dramas*, edited by Fred Eastman, will have several plays for high school production. Look also into Marcus Bach's *Vesper Dramas*. Of course, you are acquainted with *Outward Bound*, by Sutton Vane. The story of life after death. *The Steeplejack* has always appealed to me because it is a beautiful story showing the real values of life and of the Church. Authored by K. E. Kester.

Other plays mentioned at random would be excellent for production (they are full length) or for reading and discussion in your drama club. *The Servant in the House*, *The Rib of Man*, *The Idol Breakers* and others by Charles Rann Kennedy. His latest is *Three Plays for Three Players*. University of Chicago Press publishes them. Then there's *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, by Jerome K. Jerome, from French; and *Little Plays of St. Francis*, by Laurence Houseman, again from Baker's.

* * *

The point we've been trying to make throughout this article is that serious plays have a definite place in the play production schedule of the high school. It is not true that in war time people want only entertainment. Britain discovered this long ago and we might as well recognize it now. People are upset, confused. They have lost their spiritual equilibrium. The production of the kind of plays selected here would give some degree of comfort and consolation. Furthermore, the world, as probably never before, needs the illustrations of Christ's teachings. Call it dramatized religion, if you will. Every agency of education should bend all effort to stabilize our emotions; to strengthen our hopes; to clarify our vision.

And last of all, the actual production of Biblical and religious plays is an experiment in Christian living. It is a co-operative enterprise in which each person loses his own identity, his own aspirations, for the sake of the whole. If our young people can be made to realize this by the high school teachers, as well as by the Church, we can be assured of a Better World of Tomorrow.



Scene from the play, *The Brat*, as produced at the Charleston, West Va., High School. (Thespian Troupe 200), with Mr. Lawrence W. Smith directing.

Polishing the Show

by ROBERT W. MASTERS

Director of Dramatics and Troupe Sponsor, Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana

ANY direction of amateurs must first, it seems to me, be concentrated on the good old fundamentals. I begin at the start to pound into the actors the importance of carefully blocked action, definite movement, carefully planned business, and, in general, a set pattern for the basic movement and speech of the play.

Rather than dwell on these fundamentals in directing, let's look at a few perhaps unusual and experimental ones. We have finished blocking action on the third act. The first two acts are in fairly good shape. We are now ready for polishing and final rehearsals. The cast has become well acquainted with each other—some in fact have paired off and romances have sprung up. By now all understand that the rehearsal is a period of work, but enjoyable. The cast now moves fairly easily through the pattern. Action, movement, and business are definite for the most part. Characterization is improving, and attention is being paid to the pictorial effects and to improvement of motivation. What can we do now to polish off the show? Here are a few ideas.

1. BOOKS have been laid aside but insist on verbatim memorization. It gives confidence to the player when he knows that he knows exactly and helps those who are dependent on cues they expect. You can remind your actors too that if they feel they can change or disregard some of the author's lines, then they should be playwrights, not actors.

2. DO the action completely, always! In other words, rehearse with as much energy as the performance will require.

3. THERE is a time for horseplay—but it is not during rehearsal.

4. REMIND your actors to be conscious of all they have learned so far about blocking, upstaging, definite movement, projection, and pointing. (You might drive home the importance of definite action patterns by suggesting to the cast that they imagine the stage floor has been covered with a sprinkling of flour. Let them figure out whether after they have moved through the action on this flour covered floor there would be definite imprints or smudgy ones.)

5. BY this time the players should be rehearsing with the costume, prop, or semblance of each, which will be used in actual performance.

6. HAVE a rehearsal for sound and lights and make your actors proceed with an uninterrupted doing of the play amidst flickering light changes, poundings, and backstage plottings of technicalities.

7. SUGGEST a new idea for a scene, for movement, for interpretation, perhaps at the very last moment. Let the cast feel that there are still possibilities for excellence which they have not discovered. Often a new idea or a change in a scene will stimulate the acting for the whole play.

8. MAKE the cast feel that the crews for scenery, lights, sound, costume, and make-up have been as hardworking as they. The cast

should feel grateful, and responsible for the stage crews who have provided them the correct background for their acting. Let the cast have no delusions of superiority because they are in the cast instead of on a crew.

9. LET each member of the cast, in his off-stage moments, watch the rehearsal. Then ask him for his observations.

10. IN one of the latter rehearsals, run through the action of the play without lines. This will show your actors the necessity for gestures and facial expressions.

11. I HAVE found that simply moving through the large action pattern of a scene before it is rehearsed with lines makes for better remembrance of words when the scene is actually played. This is helpful when you return to a rehearsal of an act which has had to be laid aside for a while.

12. OFTEN I suggest to my actors on the night of dress rehearsal or performance when they begin to get qualms, particularly about losing their voice, that they try a lemon. This has a good psychological effect for the actor is diverted and his worry about his performance goes into the sourness of the lemon.

13. ON the last lap of the show I re-impress my actors with my theory that acting is a business which must be fitted into their regular routine much as any other activity. They must get the proper amount of rest, the right food, and relaxation. Then, too, I let them know that they are privileged to act in this play IF they do not let it interrupt the normal flow of their school and home life. I definitely proclaim against any cutting of classes or sleeping in on days of dress rehearsals or performance. And, there is no such thing as *temperament* in the amateur theatre.

14. FINALLY, give your young actors a professional point of view on this school theatre. There is no need for amateur productions to have any slovenly aspects.

Radio Experience for Your Thespian Troupe

by RALPH F. DONALDSON

Instructor in Speech and Art, Florida State College for Women Demonstration Schools.
(Troupe No. 153), Tallahassee, Fla.

THE radio is rapidly taking its place alongside the stage as a medium of expression for high school speech and dramatics classes. The alert teacher has realized the value of the radio as an aid in training voice.

During the 1941-42 school year, our Thespian Troupe 153 organized and sponsored a series of bi-monthly radio productions over the local station, WTAL—a project that proved very valuable not only as a method of teaching, but also as a means of a practical and worthwhile diversion from standard class activities. This article is written with the hope that it may inspire some of its readers to organize such a program.

As there was only a comparatively small number of Thespians at that time, resources were limited and what was lacking in numbers had to be balanced by enthusiasm and hard work on the part of the members and director. Since radio productions necessitate not only characters for the play, but also a supporting crew to produce sound effects, music and other details, the speech class became interested and was included in the project.

At first the boys and girls were rather nervous, some more than others, some more so than they had been in stage productions. After their initial performance it seemed unusually easy.

For the project we used non-royalty radio plays, selecting as varied assortment as possible, staggering the types of plays to avoid falling into the "rut" of comedy productions or that of "dramatic productions." The local station cooperated to the fullest. They were glad to give us time on the air for two reasons: first, it was beneficial to the school and to the community; second, it gave variety to the station's daily schedule. And so on every other Thursday afternoon we were introduced to the radio audience as "THE THESPIANS OF THE AIR," to present our program which ran fifteen or thirty minutes.

One week our choice would be a historical drama, the next a farce, then a psychological study, and so on. In this manner the students were given more opportunities in portraying a great variety of characters. Imagine the surprise of our audience when it found that its pretty heroine could become a convincingly unpleasant character over the air and the little mouse of a girl whom none had given second notice on the stage became a lovable, unforgettable character when she put her voice to work in the portrayal of a blind girl around whom the story of her play had been woven.

Radio Plays

The following radio plays were presented by Troupe 153 in connection with the project described by Mr. Donaldson:

The Last Word, The Dark Room, Merry Christmas, Efficiency Expert, The Silver Coronet, Even the Blind, Away From It All, Give Me Wings Brother. (These plays are found in the volume, "100 Non-Royalty Radio Plays," published by Greenberg, Publisher, 400 Madison Ave., New York City.)

The project also included poetry reading programs and broadcasts of scenes from the stage play, *Little Women*.

One of the greatest advantages of radio productions is that they afford opportunities for those few students (who are found in almost every school) who are physically handicapped, to express themselves in some definite way and an opportunity to win admiration and self-assurance of which they are so in need.

Outstanding among the advantages gained through the year's work were: first, the students learned more thoroughly even than they had in their three-act stage productions the necessity for and the reward of complete cooperation. In radio work that is an essential element. In stage productions it is often possible to cover up small faults of management, but, on the radio everything must go on schedule and exactly as planned, without a single slip. The musical overtures must be timed to the split second, sound effects must be

convincing and in complete harmony with the speakers and the play, the cues must be taken quickly (allowing for exceptions). Second, each student may win merit for himself without the possibility of "fly-catching" which is prominent in stage productions. Third, the students were able to evaluate their own work, to pick out their own mistakes and to provide their own remedial experiences. Fourth, the participants received experiences and training in voice that afforded great variety as they were not inhibited by the physical surroundings, footlights, personal appearances and stage presence. Fifth, those few students with radio talent found a field for future study.

To provide even greater variety of experiences we made a practice of rotating students. That is to say, we started out with a few experienced members and gradually added new ones, perhaps one or two inexperienced members to each play cast. Being fortunate enough to have a loud speaker radio system in our school, we had opportunities for rehearsal on our productions which also served the purpose of an aide in voice training. The new students were given small roles at first and later permitted to work in more advanced and complicated roles, while the "old timers" were given their turn on the supporting staff with all work and no "glory". Everyone had his or her turn at each phase of radio work. The mistake is often made by allowing Johnny, the school play hero, to always play "the lead" thus robbing him of any experiences with the actual production of a play. In this turn of students and parts, of course, where aptitude was shown it was encouraged. It has always been understood in our school that the staff is of equal importance to the cast.



Members of Troupe No. 153 of the Florida High School, Tallahassee, Florida, presenting the radio play, *The Dark Room*, over Station WTAL. Sponsor Ralph F. Donaldson standing in the rear right.

Appreciation Through Dramatics

(For Students)

by FRED C. BLANCHARD

Director of Dramatics, Woodrow Wilson Junior College, Chicago, Ill.

APPRECIATION of theatre! How many times we hear this high-sounding phrase. It appears in curricular statements, it is the subject of separate courses of instruction, it is the *raison d'être* of Thursday afternoon study clubs, it is much on the tongue of educators, lecturers and those who "simply love" the theatre. I'm afraid we all use the term often and glibly, but I fear, too, that most of us would be hard put to tell exactly what we mean by "appreciation."

Definition of terms is seldom easy, but there is really no use in considering a subject until we know what we are talking about. *Ergo*, let's do a little defining. One easy yet often helpful method as you have discovered in writing English themes, is to turn to the revised works of Mr. Noah Webster. Here are some of the definitions of the word "appreciate" in my desk dictionary:

To judge with respect to value, quality, or quantity.

To feel a warmth of satisfaction or approval in regard to anything.

To be critically and emotionally sensitive to the aesthetic values of.

To admire critically the artistic or technical excellence of.

At least one term in the two definitions just above needs some exact clarification. What do we mean by the adverb "critically"? Mr. Webster again, on "criticism":

The art of judging or evaluating with knowledge and propriety the beauties and faults of works of art or literature.

And what is "propriety"? Well, it means about the same as "correctness". And how can we develop "correct" standards of judgment? I hope to answer that question, in part, in the ensuing paragraphs.

But enough of this kind of intensive examination of terms. You do see, though, that appreciation is more than a mere matter of "like" or "not like". Let us look back over some of the definitive phrases which will suggest the richness of real appreciation—such as judgment of quality, warmth of satisfaction, critical admiration, correct evaluation of the beauties and faults of a work of art. Try to keep some of them in mind as we continue.

First, let's decide what appreciation is *not*. Here I am likely to tread on a few toes, for I shall mention certain theatre-going attitudes which will never lead to appreciation. One cause for a lack of appreciation is that people often go to a play for the wrong reasons. Some go because it is the thing to do, because thea-

tre-going has become a social custom. Opera box-holders are said to attend to be seen, not to see the performance. Some, especially in the case of amateur dramatics, go for family reasons—to watch the exhibition of a son, a daughter, a niece, a sister. Large casts composed of actors with dozens of relatives guarantee financial success for many an amateur production. Others attend theatrical performances to lend financial support to some cause or enterprise. The familiar "let's put on a play" is the first recourse of many money-raising committees. Others are urged to attend school performances by the appeal to "school spirit." For my part, I hope people come to any performance under my direction because they think they will see a good show, not because they feel they should support a school activity. Still others go to amateur plays for the peculiarly sadistic reason that they hope to see the performers make fools of themselves, a desire, which, I am sure, all Thespians will do their best to frustrate. One otherwise estimable lady confided to me that she always went to the first-night performances of a certain community theatre because the actors were likely to make mistakes, a prospect which she apparently anticipated with great delight. Now, some of these reasons are in themselves commendable, but they do not constitute any special compulsion for going especially to the theatre. If you attend for these reasons alone, appreciation will always be beyond you.

Let me suggest a few more attitudes which, I think, should be avoided. Too many people regard theatre as a means of "escape" from life. Theatre is certainly not that—it is rather a means of interpreting and understanding life. Of course, this does not mean that theatre should be devoid of a lively sense of fun. Two other contrasting attitudes—one of unreserved praise and the other of complete censure—are equally deplorable. I advise you to be wary of the back-slapper who tells you that every play is simply marvellous. On the other hand, don't take the chronic fault-finder too seriously. He is usually afflicted with a little knowledge only (a dangerous thing, remember), and is more

interested in exhibiting that knowledge than in a true appraisal of a performance. Another unsound type of criticism begins with the remark that the play was "pretty good for amateurs." Nonsense; a performance is either good or bad (probably a bit of both) on its own merits, and whether the performers are paid or not has no bearing on the matter. Look out for this remark, too, "I don't know anything about theatre, but I know what I like." If that is all that is necessary to express judgment, you might as well quit your study of theatre art right now. But truly, there is more to the story than that.

One of the most common attitudes about appreciation of theatre is that any knowledge of the art destroys the pleasure to be derived from it. Carried to its absurd conclusion, this argument implies that ignorance is bliss. Because you happen to be a student of theatre, people will often say to you, "Oh, you don't enjoy going to a play. You just sit there trying to find out what's wrong with it." Nothing could be more untrue. We go to the theatre because we enjoy and appreciate it. And when I say "appreciate," remember some of the meanings of the term which we have already discovered. True, the appreciator of any art is capable of detecting flaws in design and execution. But he will see things for what they are, and when a really fine play comes along, his enjoyment will be more deep and lasting than that of the casual theatre-goer.

Let me advise you to find out all you can about theatre in order to develop standards of judgment and appreciation. Your high school dramatics work gives you the opportunity to do so. The best way of learning, I think, is by doing. Here your dramatics program is again of great value, because you become a participant as well as a theoretical student.

Then, go to the playhouse, like anyone else, for the pleasure you find there. Sit back in your seat and enjoy yourself, but don't leave all your critical faculties at home. When the play is over, ask yourself a series of questions about it. Decide what you liked and why, what you disliked and why. For in the answer to that "why", you demonstrate your ability truly to appreciate.

What knowledge and attitudes do you need to be able to evaluate and appreciate the theatre? Let's mention some of the most important. First, you must achieve an understanding of the theatre as an artistic medium, an institution, a social force. Drama is an outgrowth of the times in which it is produced; you must then know the characteristics of theatrical movements and periods. You must have some conception of the fundamental and unique appeals of the theatre. Perhaps Aristotle was right when he stated the theory of "imitation through action." At any rate, include Aristotle in the few *must* books on aesthetic theory. You should know the relationship of theatre to the other arts, including the art of literature.

No Time For Lip Service

We still have thousands of people in our country whose only contribution to the war effort is lip service. Dramatics directors, where do you stand? Your help is urgently needed. Enlist your dramatics club as a contributor to the High School Theatre For Victory Program. Details appear on page 1.



Troupe initiation at the Preston, Idaho, High School (Troupe No. 39). Sponsored by Mrs. Gwyn Clark (seen in the center back row).

You must be able to recognize the several kinds of dramatic material. Catholicity of taste is desirable; we should be able to enjoy all kinds of theatre, in their place and time. The forthright farce of Abbott and Costello, the satire of a Lunt-Fontanne high comedy, the nobility of an Evans production of *Macbeth*, the suspense of a radio thriller—all are capable of their own sort of excellence. But the appreciator will know the particular merits and limitations of any type of production he is witnessing. He will not be confused or deceived by the spectacular or pretentious. Another vital matter is the possible setting up of a hierarchy of values. In simpler language, can we say that one kind of play is better than another? I advise you to think seriously about this matter, to solve it at least to your own satisfaction. My personal belief is that great drama and theatre try to show man in his relationship to his own soul, to the universe—to God, if you will. Great theatre is a search for ultimate truth, a dealing with the eternal qualities of mankind. That may not be the final answer for you. But do some straight and honest thinking on the subject, anyway.

Now and almost finally, let me jot down for you a few of those "why" questions you can ask yourself after seeing any production.

Was the play an effective one of its special kind? Did it move the audience in the way desired by the author? Were you interested in the characters? Did the story hold your attention? These questions, obviously, have to do with the work of the playwright. And by the way, the good critic can distinguish between the merits of the play and the production, the actor and the part.

Now, for a few questions on the production. *Was the idea of the play understood and successfully presented by the director, the actor, the designer? Was the*

method appropriate to the material? This is important, and a good starting point for discussion. Was the acting sincere? That is, was it founded on complete intellectual and imaginative processes? Was the acting skillful? Did it demonstrate the trained use of body, voice and mind? Was the acting based on characterization? Was it convincing? Did the characters satisfy your expectations? Again, were you moved and was your attention held by the play as interpreted by the actors, designer, director? Here it should be observed that you ought to know how to discern and analyze the contributions made by each of these co-operating artists of the theatre. Finally, in order to avoid a prejudiced judgment, analyze your own personal ideas in relation to the subject matter and method of production of any play. Note carefully your own dislikes. Criticism often reveals more about the critic than the play being criticized.

I'm afraid we are getting in pretty deep water, but if you can answer some of these pertinent and disturbing queries, you will be developing your critical faculties. And don't worry. The process will not spoil your fun. Those of us who are especially interested in theatre have the chance to add to our pleasure and appreciation through knowledge. We know that the theatre is more than a warm place to spend an evening in winter, or a cool place to spend an afternoon in summer. We go to the theatre to laugh, yes. But we also go to cry, to think, to feel, to understand, vicariously to live.

In other articles, we have been frank enough to admit that we are not all going to make our living in the theatre. But certainly we hope to be theatre-goers all our lives. Our work in high school dramatics can, at the very least, add to our enjoyment of theatrical art. That alone would make all our work worth the doing.

A MESSAGE TO YOUTH

Text of address by Vice-President Henry A. Wallace to the youth of America during the OWI-produced Victory Hour program given over the Blue Network, Tuesday, January 26, 1943.

I AM glad that the boys and girls in our high schools are giving thought to the problems of tomorrow as well as to those of today. Of course your hearts are first of all in the war and in the complete victory the United Nations are out to win. Many of you have older brothers or uncles or cousins in the Army, Navy or Marine Corps. Some boys now in school are almost 18 and are planning to enter the service soon. Other boys and girls will do their part in the war by working on farms and in many other ways.

All of you are wondering what kind of world you are going to live in when the war is over and you are following careers of your own. You are hoping that that world will be one of peace and stability, and that you will have a decent chance to show what you can do.

One thought I would like to leave with you above all else is this: The world you will live in will be what you and the others of your generation make it. There will be plenty of problems and obstacles. It will be your job to study those problems and overcome those obstacles.

You, and all of us, will have to think hard about the policies we want our nation to follow in the next few years, if we wish to make certain that the victory, when it comes, is worth the winning. We shall have to face facts, and some of those facts will not be pleasant ones. But unless we do face the facts, and all the facts, we can not make our coming victory count in terms of increased opportunity for useful work.

We shall have to think about the part to be played by the armies and navies and air forces of the world; about disarming aggressors and keeping them disarmed; about safeguarding the world's peace; about ways to get and keep full production and full employment in our own country; about world prosperity and world trade, and the effect of our own tariff and investment policies; about ways to make the voices of plain people heard in the councils and the affairs of our nation.

If we in the United States face the facts, and then take whatever action those facts require, we shall have done our full part in helping toward the restoration of human lives and human values for which millions have already paid the highest price that man can pay. Sharing vitally in this great task will be the high school students of today, who are the leaders and the builders of tomorrow. We can, if we will, make the post-war world exceed the pre-war world in abundance, jobs and happiness.—

U. S. Office of Education.

Staging the High School Play

This department is designed to assist teachers in choosing, casting, and producing plays at the high school level. Suggestions as to plays which should be discussed next or how this department may be of greater assistance to teachers will be welcomed.

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Thespian Senior Councilor and Director of Dramatics at Berea College, Berea, Ky.

"Listen, Mr. Speaker"

(As staged by Donald Woods at the Hibbing, Minnesota, High School.)

"Listen, Mr. Speaker," a patriotic revue. Cast of about 70. Orchestra. Five simple revue settings. Royalty, \$10.00. Music rental for one month, \$15.00. Published by the Medley Company, 2527 21st Avenue, Oakland, California.

Suitability

DRAMATICS teachers and school music departments are frequently confronted with the problem of finding a good patriotic show. Such a show needs visual appeal, worthwhile music, a sincere theme, and (although this may be denied by some) it should have a certain amount of entertainment woven into it. We Americans love and respect our flag, and we do not enjoy seeing a weakly designed and poorly executed stage production which employs shallow flag-waving devices to gain applause. The production should inspire faith in the flag and in all of the things it symbolizes, rather than attempt to steal glory from it, hoping that a shoddy and feeble production will appear better than it is, if enough pseudo-patriotism is sprinkled liberally over the stage.

Our high school needed a program for our commencement exercises. There were many requirements to be met—it should not be too expensive, it should be within the grasp of the students, it should not be too long, it should be interesting for graduates, parents, undergraduates, and all others who might attend the affair, and, if possible, its theme should be patriotic.

A member of our faculty enthusiastically recalled that she had seen a production—"Listen, Mr. Speaker"—exactly suited to our needs. She had witnessed it at a national education convention in California. Copies were obtained, the script and music were adjusted to our needs and capabilities, and the show was presented with gratifying results.

"Listen, Mr. Speaker," bears the subtitle: "A Patriotic Revue Dedicated to American Youth." It has been written by people who evidently understand high school students and their talents. Ideally suited for high school production, this show will undoubtedly be produced many times in the near future. We found it necessary to simplify a few sections to suit our time, talents, and resources, which leads me to believe that the script and the music can be adapted to many requirements.

Plot and Staging

The story is simple but effective. A politician ("Mr. Speaker") has gathered a group of citizens so that he can feed them with a great deal of empty patriotic mouthings and also to make a plea for votes. The crowd becomes bored with his selfish and shallow jargon, and all leave, except the four members of the Smith family who linger on in hopes that they will hear something inspirational. Two reporters and a photographer inquire of the Smiths as to just what it is that they hope to hear from an American leader—and the Smiths oblige.

Betty Smith speaks first, telling what an inspiration American music is to her. At this point the "city backdrop" rises, disclosing a scrim curtain. Behind the scrim, various musical groups perform in rapid succession—an Italian peddler, a lullaby mother, an Alma Mater quartette, a soldier, a pair of rumba dancers, a church choir, etc.—each singing only a few bars of a smoothly blended, yet ever varying selection. Between each individual group in this scene, the lights are dimmed out for a moment, so as to allow the arrivals and departures of each group to be done unobtrusively. During these momentary blackouts two means are employed to keep the scene unified. The first is the use of a sextet which sings a couple of transitional phrases between the various sequences. The second is the use of a modernistic design (which incorporated the outlines of numerous musical instruments—as explained under No. 3 in the following "Stage Problems" section).

Then the city-drop comes down again and Mrs. Smith proceeds to tell the speaker that the sanctity of the American home is a patriotic inspiration to her. The city-drop goes up and we now see the suggestion of a house on stage—a sort of stage vignette. This scene is reminiscent of the quiet and appealing charm of *Our Town*. Off at one side of the stage "the home-town girl" stands and tells about the joys of her own home and what a thrill graduation night was for her. During her narration (much of it done with a simple melody played in the back-

Donald Woods

THERE is no need to introduce Mr. Woods. We remember him for his interesting articles on the staging of "Seven Keys To Baldpate" and "Captain Applejack."

When I learned that he had staged the successful patriotic pageant, "Listen, Mr. Speaker," I felt sure directors would want to know about it. He generously consented to write it up.

After reading Mr. Woods' article, I am sure you will be enthusiastic about this pageant and will find it a solution to many of your program difficulties.

ground) there are actors moving silently about the house, in "the street" in front of house, etc.

We did the whole scene in a soft blue light with only a couple of faint, amber high-lights.

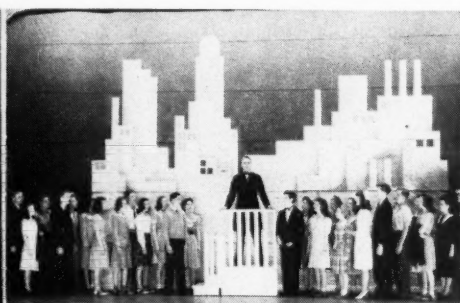
The city drop is lowered once more and young Bill Smith takes the speaker's platform to tell what America means to him. Following his short speech, the curtain rises again, revealing a group of students (composing a speaking choir) with a huge map of the United States and a blackboard serving for a background. The choral group (accompanied by the pit piano) present a novel and comprehensive history lesson touching on the high spots and concluding with Lincoln's famous: "government of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . ."

The city drop once more cuts off the fore-stage from the stage proper and Mr. Smith's turn has come to tell what America means to him. He tells of its height, its breadth, and its power. The city drop rises. On the full stage are now a number of graduated levels. At the extreme up-stage center is a higher pedestal on which stands a boy who is known in the script as "The Prayer". His simple costume—a white shirt and dark trousers—is symbolic of the simplicity with which most prayers are made. The first portion of his prayer asks that he may be given enough vision to fully appreciate the heights of America—its mountains, its tall trees, its mighty sky-scrapers. The rest of the stage is then lighted, for only a single spotlight has so far been used, focused directly on the boy "Prayer". Three blonde girls, clad in white, enter and perform a dance—a very simple one—consisting mainly of rhythmic motions to indicate height. At the conclusion of their dance they station themselves on the elevated steps. Next "The Prayer" asks that he be permitted to realize the full breadth of America—the broad fields—the lush valleys—the pasture-lands. Four brunette girls, wearing star-studded blue costumes enter, and execute a dance which—in its broad sweeps—visually symbolizes the "breadth of America" of which "The Prayer" had spoken. At the conclusion of these dance patterns, the performers arrange themselves at the foot of the platform.

In the third and final portion of the

Note to Directors

The production of "Listen, Mr. Speaker" as part of your dramatic program for this spring can serve as an important contribution to the "High School Theatre For Victory Program." (See page 1.)



Three scenes from the patriotic pageant, "Listen, Mr. Speaker", as staged by Mr. Woods at the Hibbing, Minn., High School.



prayer, the speaker asks that he be granted the ability to feel the pulsing strength of his America. Just as in the two preceding sections, this part of the prayer has its dancing counterpart. This dance is performed by four red-trousered boys (in our case, from the swimming team). Their dance pantomimes such vigorous things as the lifting of a heavy rail, the driving of a huge stake, the hauling of a heavy barge (in Volga boatman style). The conclusion of their dance finds them high on the platforms.

"The Prayer" then summarizes his plea and the city drop falls into place again.

The politician, "Mr. Speaker," is now a chastened—and inspired—American. He realizes that there is more to true patriotism than clamoring for votes and attempting to exploit the public. The crowd comes back and there is a brief and fast-moving finale number. The complete performance lasts approximately one hour.

Casting

This show had best be worked in conjunction with the vocal music department of your school. The Smith family, the politician, the politician's stooge, "The Prayer", the speaking choir, and the dancers do not sing (except as members of large groups). Most of the other roles require simple singing.

Although a piano alone could be used for music, we used a small orchestra, which we feel brought the show a great deal closer to professional calibre.

It will undoubtedly be best to let the person who is to design and rehearse the dance routines select the performers for this number. The dance numbers were designed by, and rehearsed under the direction of an instructor from the girl's physical education department. The music for the dances is of a clearly designed style, expressive of the themes it means to express—Height, Breadth, and Power.

Directing

By working very hard and by having the full cooperation of all persons involved,

we were able to prepare the show in about 3½ weeks. The orchestra had the music for a full month before presentation date.

The show is so constructed that its individual parts can be rehearsed separately. Thus while the orchestra was rehearsing in the music room, the dancers were rehearsing in the gymnasium, and the verse speaking choir was rehearsing on stage. We had five full rehearsals to get all the parts cemented together.

One of the prime requisites of any musical show is speed. Therefore, we kept things moving all the time. All scenery changes were made as rapidly and quietly as possible.

Stage Problems

Although a suggestion of each setting employed was given in the foregoing PLOT, perhaps a few additional hints may be of help.

(1) The city backdrop was painted on the back of an old drop we had on stage. A small drawing was first made and squared off. Then with this pattern to work from, the backdrop was squared off to scale and the enlarging was simple from there on. Next the brilliant blue of the sky was painted in. Then the buildings were painted a solid white. Last, with the aid of an air-brush (a standard part of all Electrolux vacuum cleaners) the shadows were painted in on the buildings in a brilliant "flag" red. The windows in the skyscrapers were done in this same red and a couple of them in the blue of the sky background.

(2) The scrim curtain was made in our Home-Economics Department of inexpensive cheese-cloth. Standard battens were placed at top and bottom.

(3) In the California production, the design of the musical instruments was painted directly on the scrim. In our show, however, we employed a different technique to get the same effect. Our art teacher painted the design on an ordinary piece of showcard, and then we took a color-photo of the design. The finished color-photo (which is transparent) was projected onto the scrim from a stereopticon placed in the front row of the auditorium. During each blackout, the stereopticon was dimmed in, throwing the musical design in bright colors on the scrim, and then when the next scene behind the scrim was ready, the stereopticon was dimmed out, and the lighting behind the scrim was brought up. The foregoing description may sound a little ragged, but the results were unique. In the event there may be a few directors who have never experimented with a scrim curtain, an additional bit of description

may be helpful. When lights are thrown on a scrim curtain from the audience-side of the scrim, very little can be seen, by the audience, of any scenes or actors that may be behind the scrim. Then when the "audience-side" lights are dimmed out, and lighting equipment behind the scrim is brought up, the audience can see easily through the gauze. If you make your own scrim curtain, it is best to sew the lengths of cheese cloth together so that the joining seams run parallel to the stage floor.

(4) In the "Home Town" scene a simple house-front was built of wall board. The manuscript gives complete details. The house was so constructed that we were able to recover (intact) almost all material that went into it.

(5) The map of the United States was painted on a muslin-covered frame—actually a small flat. The manuscript pictures a very attractive setting, but we were forced to simplify it a good deal, for reasons of economy and rapid stage shifting. The steps the class room choir sat on were stands on which our high school glee club is arranged when giving performances.

(6) In "The Prayer" scene we used only stage equipment we already had. The stands used in the preceding scene were moved into position, and covered with a large muslin drape, "The Prayer's" pedestal (an old bookcase) was moved on stage, and the scene was ready.

Costuming

The large group of Americans at the opening of the production is dressed in ordinary clothing. Here and there in the crowd we placed a nurse, a workman, a farmer, etc.

In the "American song" section, three costumes were rented—those of a pair of rumba dancers and an American soldier.

In the "Home Town" scene, summer party clothes (pastel formals, white flannels, etc.) were worn.

In the class room scene, ordinary school room clothing was used.

For the final number, the costumes of red, white, and blue were made of sateen. The accompanying photographs will perhaps serve to indicate what the patterns for these garments were like.

Make-up

All straight make-ups were used.

Budget

The show cost us \$80 to produce, which included \$10 for royalty, \$15 for a month's

Exercises in Dramatics

by EDWIN LYLE HARDEN

Director of Dramatics, New Braunfels High School, New Braunfels, Texas

Atmosphere and Mood

THE effectiveness of plays, as well as scenes from plays, depends a great deal upon the creation and maintenance of the appropriate atmosphere or mood. Much of the atmosphere which should pervade a scene can be produced by material means of setting, scenic effects, sound effects, costumes, and so forth, but the individual can contribute to and help sustain the mood established by his attitude, bearing, movement, voice, and reaction. The audience must be made to feel the atmosphere of a play if it is to appeal; consequently the actor must understand what the mood or atmosphere is that should prevail and be a part of it.

The following scene depends greatly for its effectiveness upon the creation and projection of a dominant and ever-increasing mood. The very air of the room is tense with anticipation, anxiety, suspense, fear, and dread.

JACOB COMES HOME*

BY WILLIAM KOZLENKO

(A Jewish family, and a friend, await the return of Jacob, the father, from a Nazi concentration camp. Liese, the daughter, is at window C rear. Rudolf, the friend, at extreme L. Magda, Joseph and Hulda at RC, C, and LC, respectively. A door UR leads outside.)

The desired atmosphere is created here in part by the fact that it is night and the room is lighted only by three flickering candles, and that the curtains are drawn. The characters themselves, however, must project the anxiety and fear that should prevail, and the feeling should become more and more tense as the scene progresses to its conclusion. They speak with hushed voices, the words are spoken slowly in measured tones, and the silences are long between speeches. They move slowly, cautiously, and quietly. Rudolf, who only recently has been released from a concentration camp, has burst out emotionally under the strain. Liese, peering cautiously through the window quiets him.

Liese: (Looking out of window.) Shshsh! . . . Quiet . . . I see two men coming down the street.

Magda: (Moving a few steps UC.) Two?

rental of the complete orchestration, \$15 for copies of the script. The other \$40 was spent on making the scrim curtain, on paint, and three rented costumes.

Publicity

Because our performance of "Listen, Mr. Speaker" was for a commencement program, no advertising was necessary, but its patriotic theme should make an advertising campaign a very simple one.

Educational Results

In music, dance, and scenic effects the performance is powerful in putting across the theme of America's greatness.

(Watch for the staging of *Lost Horizon* in the April issue.)

Hulda: Are they in uniform?
Liese: They're still too far away. I can't make out.

Magda: Are they walking slowly or . . .
Liese: Slowly.
Magda: (Standing by chair UC.) One must be Jacob! (She turns center.) Oh, God, Jacob has come home! Jacob has returned to us . . . alive!

Joseph: Are they approaching closer? (He goes to window and looks over Liese's shoulder.)
Liese: Yes . . . but they do not speak to each other.

Joseph: They are afraid of the wind that would catch their words and drop them on hostile ears.

Hulda: Who can the other man be?
Rudolf: Perhaps a friend who has also been befriended.

Liese: One is tall, the other short.
Joseph: (To Magda.) The tall man must be Jacob.

Magda: There will be happiness in another home tonight.

Hulda: They must also be sitting like us, or standing by the window, watching and waiting . . .

It should be observed that the action of this scene is off stage. As Liese, and later Joseph and Magda, "bring" Joseph from the street to the door, the anxiety and fear must continually build. The characters become more tense in their posture, and their attention will be gradually shifted to the door which Jacob will enter.

Magda: Where are they now?
Liese: Crossing the street.

Joseph: If my eyes were not so dim, I would stand here and count the number of steps that would bring Jacob to this door.

Rudolf: I would do it; but I dare not show my face at the window.

Liese: I would say they are about fifty feet away . . .

Hulda: You still can't see their faces?
Liese: They have hats pulled down low.

Joseph: They must either be ashamed or afraid.

Rudolf: If they are Jews, they are afraid. If . . .

Liese: Rudolf, quiet!

Magda: Jacob will soon be here. (Going to Joseph.) Do I look well? Are my eyes red?

Joseph: He will welcome you as you are.

Magda: (Looking around to include the others.) No, no, I must look my best! He is returning home. When he opens the door, let us start to sing . . .

Rudolf: Sing softly, or they will think we have feasted on wine.

Joseph: Or that we are too happy.

Magda: I am happy. Why should I deny it? Jacob has returned home!

Joseph: He must not speak of his suffering. His silence will be more eloquent. But we . . . we must talk of everything else but the things

You're Wrong

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that have given him so much pain.

Rudolf: He will look at you with strange, fearful eyes.

Magda: He will be home!

Rudolf: There will be dread in them . . . Words will falter on his tongue . . .

Liese: We promise not to stare at him.

Rudolf: Each here will ask himself: "Can this be the same living Jacob who left this house ten days ago?"

Joseph: He will return as if he had arisen from the grave.

Rudolf: Remember to let your eyes tell lies. When he looks into them, let him not see what you see.

Liese: (Taking Magda's arm.) We will laugh, and our eyes will laugh with us.

Magda: He will be home! That's all I know! That's all I care!

Rudolf: But you must make him smile! Must make him laugh! Must . . .

Liese: (At window.) Softer, Rudolf. They are coming toward the house.

Rudolf: . . . Make him forget even for an hour.

Joseph: The hour will begin in a moment.

Liese: They are nearer . . .

As the suspense increases the voices gradually assume a higher pitch, are more animated, more fraught with emotion. They take on that unnatural tone of breathless fear and anticipation. Each character speaks more or less independently of the others to give the impression of being completely governed by his own feelings. The remainder of the scene builds rapidly to the very breaking point emotionally.

Magda: Sixty more seconds and we shall hear his step . . .

Liese: They are looking around.

Magda: Strangers look around. Jacob is no stranger.

Rudolf: (Taking a step toward C.) It must be . . .

Liese: Shshsh!

Hulda: If the bell should suddenly ring . . .

Liese: (Turning toward C.) Why couldn't I make out their faces?

Hulda: . . . I would faint.

Rudolf: Your eyes must be wet, Liese.

Hulda: How can you see when the night is so dark?

Joseph: He is walking up the stairs . . . step by step . . .

Rudolf: They walk very slowly after they come back.

Magda: Now he's on the first landing . . .

Joseph: He has stopped to catch his breath.

Magda: Now he is turning . . .

Hulda: Is there a light in the hallway?

Joseph: One more flight and . . .

Magda: Shshsh! (They are all turned toward the door, paralyzed. Waiting, waiting. A great deep silence is being ticked away by unheard seconds. Rudolf leans forward across the table. Joseph rises, tense. Magda takes a step R. then pauses. Suddenly from the other room comes a crash of glass, as if a rock had been hurled through the window.)

Hulda: (Jumping up.) My God!

Joseph: Of the two, neither was Jacob. (Starts to walk slowly into the other room.)

Magda: Father! Father, don't go in!

**Jacob Comes Home*, by William Kozlenko. Published by Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Illinois. Excerpts reprinted by permission.

THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN



Make-up For the High School Theatre

By PROF. RAY E. HOLCOMBE

Department of Drama, Ithaca College, Ithaca, N. Y.

Questions pertaining to your problems on make-up are welcomed by Prof. Holcombe. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your letter.



Question: Should rouge be applied to boys' lips? G. W.

ANSWER: In a great many instances, too much rouge is put on the lips of boys in the cast, with the result that they look too "pretty-pretty". Use a medium rouge and apply lightly. Then clamp a piece of cleansing tissue between the lips so that a minimum of color remains. Usually, the amount that remains after you have attempted to remove as much as you can will be about right.

Question: In attempting to get an older look for the girl who plays my character lead in *Double Door*, I seem to be unable to get little effect in make-up except that of a "smudged" face. What suggestion would you make? J. W.

ANSWER: You have evidently tried to get your effect by an intricate pattern of lining with highlights of the lighter shades of grease paint which tend to mix with the dark colors to make a muddy effect. As I suggested in a previous article, I advocate a different plan of procedure. I advise that you study magazine pictures showing characters as near like the ones you have in your play. Determine from these the dominant clues that contribute most strongly to the impression of the character. From the pictures you will note that a few, very significant features do the trick. In the case of the character you suggest you might center on such items as a high collar with a ribbon band or with a quaint brooch, a severe up-sweep of the hair, powdered at the sides, and a shirt-waist type of costume. A fairly light base should be used and the eyebrows grayed at the inner edges and blended into the rest of the eyebrow. As for lines—don't use any. Subtle shadowing with brown may help but avoid clear cut lines.

Question: I find that when I use nose putty the nose appears lighter than the make-up and too prominent and unnatural. What can be done to make it blend with the base? E. L. P.

ANSWER: Put moist rouge over the putty area, then mix in a little brown. Following this, put the base color over it and the light color of the putty will not shine through.

Question: Will you point out what seems to be wrong in my way of lining the eyes? (Drawing and explanation enclosed.) D. L.

ANSWER: I do not wonder that you have been criticized for too heavy eye make-up, but the principal mistake made is a very common one. Do not put on your eyeshadow so that it extends from the lashes to the eyebrow. Leave a strip just below the eyebrow free of the color so that the eyebrow does not tend to blur into

the color from eyeshadow. Put a fair amount of eyeshadow close to the lashes then make it fade away in tone as you go up over the lid until the bone below the eyebrow is left free of color. When you apply eyeshadow without gradation in tone, you violate the very essential principles in shading.

Question: Is it necessary to place a small red dot at the inner corner of the eyes? C. B.

ANSWER: No. I have yet to hear any satisfactory explanation of the virtues of such a practice. Experiments of a very simple type in which those with dots were paraded before judges and then compared with those without, have exploded the contention that the red dot adds sparkle or life to the eye. Results indicated that judges could not determine which characters were dotted or undotted. If the dot was small it seemed to blend in with the eyeshadow; if it was large it made the character look weepy-eyed.

Question: Would you advise the use of artificial eye lashes for the portrayal of a glamorous-looking young lady? M. S.

ANSWER: I think them quite unnecessary. They are intended for use in "close-up" shots in motion picture work. For stage use they represent a useless expense since shadowing and properly lining the eye will accomplish as good, if not better results. If the lashes seem to need it, one can always use mascara. In a number of schools the artificial eye lash set has been the focal point for trouble. The girl who brings them seems, to the rest of the cast, to be setting herself apart as a trifle superior to her fellow actors. I'd advise banning them. The practice of allowing one person to have a seemingly exclusive make-up aid is quite undemocratic. In talking to high school students I bring up the matter, explaining to them that we can get better results without spending money on a product not adapted to our work. I find that in this way I avoid later trouble.

Question: How can I make the eyes look larger in the case of a girl with small, deep-set eyes? M. R.

ANSWER: Run the base over the eyebrows or, if necessary, soap them out if they are too wide. Then make up only the top line of the brows extending the width a bit above the natural brow. Pencil or brush in a line of dark brown or black farther away from the lower lash than usual. Highlight with a fine line of white the upper part of inner corner of the upper lid for a distance of about 3/16"

Questions on Make-up

High school dramatics directors are urged to submit questions pertaining to make-up problems in specific situations. Title of plays and names and characters should be mentioned.

If an immediate answer is requested, a stamped, self-addressed envelope should be enclosed; otherwise the reply will appear on this page.

All questions should be addressed to Prof. Holcombe, Department of Drama, Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York.

fading off in the direction of the lid fold. Be exceedingly sparing of eyeshadow.

Question: When I put on gray eyebrows or white ones they always seem to look artificial. Should I use crepe hair instead?

ANSWER: If you want an effect of very bushy brows you probably should use crepe hair. However, your trouble is very apt to be centered in the manner of your making up the eyebrows. If you study the color tone of eyebrows you will note that they are not evenly colored. The inner part is different than the outer and the wide part has a broken color effect that gives it form and texture. Try putting a dab of medium or light brown at the inner end of the eyebrow. Then, place a generous dab of white in the center of each eyebrow. Take a fine toothed comb and comb through the brown into the white following to the end of the eyebrow. Then, as you comb through the second time, some of the white will comb into the brown, leaving a very natural looking eyebrow showing shades of brown and allowing hairs to stand out to advantage. Try other experiments with gray and with white and you will note that the same principle obtains.

Question: In playing the part of an older woman I want to get the effect of stained or yellowed teeth. Is there some easy but harmless way to do this? E. B.

ANSWER: Factors sell a tooth enamel for this purpose. In a number of cases I've known of the application of a much simpler means, the chewing of licorice or eating blueberries. This dulls the teeth and leaves them grayish rather than yellow. A little iodine in a glass of water can be swished in the mouth. This leaves the teeth yellowed. In the case of the iodine, I advise consulting one's dentist as to the amount and as to the practice. He may be able to suggest something better.

Question: Should moustaches and beards be applied before make-up is put on? G. N.

ANSWER: No, never. Do your whole make-up job, powder and all and then put on crepe hair. You'll find that it adheres more easily, looks better and does not irritate the face upon removal.

The Technician's Roundtable

Conducted by A. S. GILLETTE

Technical Director, University Theatre,
State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

Question: We are considering a production of *Peter Pan*, but before we commit ourselves to it, I wanted to check with you regarding the problems presented by the "flying scenes." Where can we rent the flying harnesses or would it be possible for us to make them and what kind of a rigging would you suggest with which to fly them?

Answer: Considering the number of times this play has been produced, I feel certain that the flying harnesses can be rented from some of the standard costume houses. Try writing to Brooks Costume Co., 1150 Sixth Avenue, New York City, or to Eaves Costume Co., 151 West 46th Street, New York City. If they do not handle them, they may be able to suggest some company that does.

We made the harnesses used in our production and found them extremely satisfactory. It is not likely that you could make them in your own costume shop, since the materials are very heavy and demand special equipment, but if you can obtain the services of a first-rate tent and awning maker, you should have no more trouble in making them than we did. In designing these flying harnesses, or vests, we kept two aims uppermost in mind—they had to be perfectly safe, and they had to be adjustable so they would fit the various members of our double cast. In general appearance the vests resembled swimming suits, but here all likeness ceased. They were made of very heavy

canvas reinforced with 2-inch webbing and leather and laced together at the shoulders, the crotch and along the sides with rawhide thongs. Around the waist was a wide reinforcing leather band which laced separately. This leather band was sewn and riveted to the body of the vest, while at the back of it were attached the metal rings by which the actors were lifted. The two crotch straps, formed by folding over the webbing, padded with cotton and covered with chamois, were found to be more comfortable and satisfactory than one. These straps were a continuation of the back of the vest, while the free ends were passed between the legs and each strap laced to the front of the vest a little to one side of a center line. Much of the difficulties of working with the heavy materials can be simplified if a preliminary vest of some light material such as muslin is made and fitted to the actors. This vest was then taken apart and used as a pattern.

The stage business required in the flying scenes in *Peter Pan* automatically eliminates the use of the complex traveler and block combinations used in such productions as *Das Rheingold*. A simpler rigging that will provide greater flexibility of movement for the actor is generally used, although this is likely to mean that the matter of balance is now entirely up to the actor rather than dependent upon the harness and rigging. Unless your stage has an exceptionally low grid, the following rigging may be used to very good advantage. The materials needed are 1/2-inch rope (it's difficult to grip a rope of smaller diameter), two single loft blocks, a single pulley, a metal ring, piano wire and a harness hook. This rigging provides a mechanical advantage of 2 to 1 that reduces the weight to be lifted by the flyman to half the weight of the actor. Riggings offering a greater mechanical

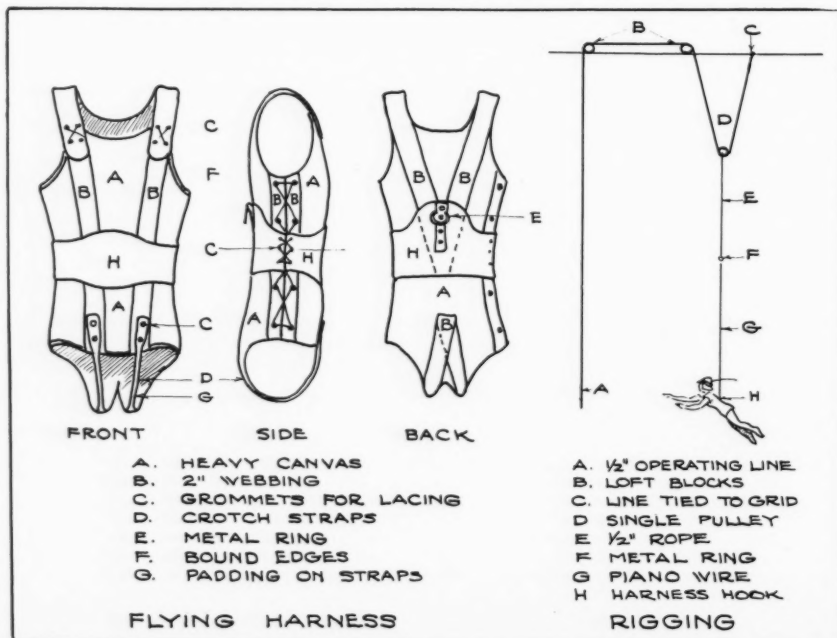
advantage are usually found too slow in their operation to be effective for this problem. There is little use in attempting to describe this rigging, as the sketch is self-explanatory. There are one or two points regarding the operation of this rigging that should be mentioned. It is absolutely essential that the flyman have an unobstructed view of the stage, where he may watch every movement of the actor he is flying. The success of these flying scenes will depend in a great part on how well the flyman and actor can synchronize their movements and this cannot be done if the flyman's view of the actor is obscured. This particular rigging resembles a pendulum in operation, hence it is entirely up to the actor to determine the direction, speed and force of all his flights. All that the flyman can do is raise or lower the actor during his flight. This, however, does not present any difficulties that cannot be overcome by adequate practicing by the actor and his flyman.

Question: We have a mirror on the side wall of our setting in such a position that it reflects the stage lights out into the auditorium and into the eyes of the audience. Is there some sort of a solution that would frost the glass and yet which can be easily removed?

Answer: There is, but it sounds terrible. Pour a little beer, preferably some that has been standing until it is stale and warm, into a saucer or pan, and add to this some epsom salts. With a sponge or soft cloth pat this solution onto the mirror. After this has dried you'll discover a very nice frosted glass effect that can be removed with a warm, damp cloth.

Question: There is a scene in *High Tor* when two men are marooned high above the stage floor in the bucket of a steam shovel. They make a rope of torn strips of handkerchiefs and shirts and finally lasso a bottle of beer left on the rocks below, but just as the bottle is almost within their reach the "rope" breaks and the bottle disappears from view as it falls over the edge of the cliff. How can we rig this rope so that it will break at just the right time?

Answer: The rope is obviously made of strips of torn cloth knotted together. A short distance above the bottle a thread is used as a connecting link between two sections of the rope and concealed by a fake knot. A slight pull on the bottle and the thread will break. Now take a beer bottle and using a sharp center punch and a hammer, tap a small hole in the bottom of it. If you have trouble with this method, a hole may be drilled in the bottom of the bottle by using a sharp steel drill lubricated with turpentine. Tie a strong linen thread to the center of a finishing nail and insert the nail and thread through the hole; the nail will turn at right angles to the hole and serve as an anchor. A stage hand concealed by the rocks of the setting can guide the loop of the "rope" around the neck of the bottle as the actors supposedly try to snare it. The actors carefully pull the bottle towards the bucket and at the proper cue the stagehand pulls on the linen thread, which will break the connecting thread on the rope.



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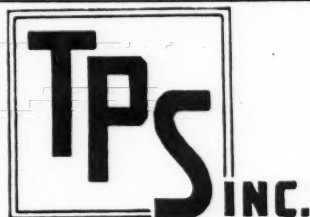
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News about interesting and important events in the field of high school dramatics. Dramatics directors are urged to contribute brief articles concerning their major activities from month to month.

Morgantown, W. Va.

MEMBERS of Thespian Troupe No. 27 of the Morgantown High School were warmly praised for their production of *Out of the Frying Pan*, given on December 4, with Miss Dorothy Stone White directing. "The audience enjoyed the play mightily and we received nothing but praise for our efforts," writes Miss White. The sum of \$25, taken from the net proceeds of this production, was given to the Stage Door Canteen Fund. The first Thespian initiation of the season was held in January. Over thirty O. C. D. plays have been broadcast over the local radio station this season, with Miss White as director. Many of the leading roles were taken by Thespians of the Morgantown High School.

Welch, W. Va.

AMONG the dramatic events of the fall term for members of Troupe No. 204 of the Welch High School, with Miss Eleanore E. Reed as sponsor, were three performances of *A Psalm of Thanksgiving* (school assembly, Methodist Church, and Lions Club), and two performances of the play, *Eternal Life*. The program also included a performance of the melodrama, *Fireman, Save My Child*. In January eighteen new members were added to the troupe under Miss Reed's direction. Troupe No. 204 contributed the sum of \$30 to the Stage Door Canteen Fund late in December.

Laramie, Wyo.

AN attractive program in the form of a Thespian insignia, and expert acting greeted the audience attending the performance of *Ever Since Eve* on October 23 at the Laramie High School. This was the first play of the current season for members of Thespian Troupe No. 70, with Miss Velma Linford as director and Miss Colleen Manfull as assistant director. The second full-length play of the year, *Professor, How Could You?* was produced on November 24 by the Junior Class with Miss Dorothea Kuepper as director. The Christmas Season was observed with the performance of an original program, with Thespians and the Music Department as sponsors. Thespians were responsible for two one-act plays during the fall term. Part of the net receipts from the production of *Ever Since Eve* was contributed to the Stage Door Canteen Fund. The spring's dramatics schedule is already well under way.—*Bob McKay, Secretary.*

Massillon, Ohio

THE second major play of the current year, *Family Portrait*, will be presented on March 12 at the Washington High School, with Miss Virginia Lee as director. The production will be given under the sponsorship of the Struts and Frets Dramatics Club (Thespian Troupe No. 178). The season opened with two performances of *The Man Who Came to Dinner* on November 12, 13. Members of Troupe No. 178 continue to receive praise for their publication, "Thespian Masque," mailed to all active and alumni members of the club.

Davenport, Iowa

THESPIAN Troupe No. 510 of the Davenport High School, with Mr. Donald Hopkins

as founder and sponsor, opened its current dramatics season with a successful performance of *The American Way* early in the fall. Thespian Troupe No. 510 was established last spring with the following charter members: Janet Duffy, Ann Neill, Dick Steckel, Dick Prose, Patti Meahl, Ed Flemming, Jean Ann Zoeckler, Warren Boudinot, Grace Carson, Harriet Posner, Kenneth Krukow, Betty Christiansen and Don Cassling. Three new members, Alice Alfred, June Albrecht and Edward Jaeggi, were admitted this fall. The 1941-42 season at this school witnessed the production of *The Night of January 16*, *Night Must Fall*, both under Mr. Hopkins' direction, and *The Imaginary Invalid*, directed by Miss Mae Elma Wicks.—*Harriet Posner, Secretary.*

Orlando, Fla.

OUR performance of *The Very Light Brigade* on November 19 played to a packed house," reports Miss Mildred E. Murphy, dramatics director at the Orlando Senior High School. "Everyone seems starved for entertainment," continues Miss Murphy, "and we are looking forward to a successful program during 1943." A "spice box" program consisting of three one-act plays, *A Girl in Every Port*, *Suitable for Charity* and *Feet First*, was given by the Seminole Players (Thespian Troupe No. 177) on December 10, with Miss Murphy directing. Plays are already under way for a busy spring dramatics program. Miss Murphy is national director of the National Thespian Society.

Madison, S. Dak.

EVER Since Eve, given by the Senior Class on November 20, opened the 1942-43 dramatics program at the Madison High School, with Miss Mabel Phelps as director. On December 7, in observance of Pearl Harbor Day, the one-act play, *Time Is Short*, was presented to the entire student body. On January 15 the Junior Class assembly program included the one-act play, *Now Don't Laugh*. January also included the first Thespian initiation of the season. The second major play of the season,

Thespian Has Published Play

MRS. EMILIE PICHÉ, founder and sponsor for Troupe 528 of the Classical High School, Providence, R. I., writes the following note about Marilyn Hatch, a member of her Troupe:

"Marilyn deserves special mention. She is admired by all the students because she has so effectively conquered an adversity. Unable to walk, she attends classes in a specially constructed desk-on-platform-wheel chair, never missing a day of school. She has an exceptionally brilliant mind, achieving honor average in all her subjects. She is interested in writing and already has had a play, *Father's Vacation*, published by the Eldridge Entertainment House of Franklin, Ohio. We have made her an honorary member."

We wish you continued success with your excellent record, Marilyn. You are living up to the best Thespian traditions and aspirations!

Remodeling Our Old Flats

By MAY VIRDEN
Thespian Troupe Sponsor,
Shenandoah, Iowa, High School

MAKING a silk purse out of a sow's ear is nothing new, especially in the amateur theater, but the thrill which each fresh purse brings to the director "springs eternal," like Hope.

So it was with the remodeling of our old warped and sagging fourteen foot flats. The inspiration for this came from reading about a similar project which had been worked out at Cornell University.

The production which called forth this project was a group of one acts, *The Amateur Hamlet*, *Cassandra*, and *Thursday Evening*. The living-room set for the first could easily be taken care of by our cyclamora, but the stage dressing room and kitchen of the others required small sets, which the present arrangement of our stage made impossible, so some other device had to be employed.

First of all the unwieldy fourteen foot flats were cut to nine, new lumber being used to replace the warped pieces. Then they were hinged in sections of two. This made them self-supporting and eliminated braces. (Reversible hinges are ideal, but ordinary ones are much less expensive and are almost as serviceable. The shorter scenery is much more manageable and a reversible set makes a two-set play less of a problem.)

The flats had no less than ten years of paint and wall paper, which had to be removed, for nothing would stick any longer. After this had been done, they seemed in a hopeless condition; so baggy that they could never be used, but when they were papered for *Thursday Evening*, they became surprisingly taut. On the reverse side, new muslin was stretched and painted with a cold water preparation.

For *Cassandra* a practical door was essential, but the arrangement of the screens took care of entrances for *Thursday Evening*. For a later production, an archway, big window, and french window pieces were added, making sufficient scenery for the entire stage.

The small opening caused by the hinging might prove a source of annoyance to some directors, but the variety of room arrangement which can be gained by screens will soon offset any such slight disadvantage.

'Twas only an experiment, with nothing to loose because the flats were not usable the way they were, and for our set-up, it proved most successful.

with Miss Phelps as director, will be presented on April 30, with the Junior Class as sponsor.

Tuscola, Ill.

THE performance of *The King Rides By* on October 22 marked the opening of the current drama season for members of Thespian Troupe No. 180 at the Tuscola High School. The play was staged under the direction of Miss Thelma Grumbes, troupe sponsor. On November 24 Thespians followed with the production of the one-act play, *Getting Pinned*, for the benefit of the student body. The second major play of the fall semester, *Goodnight, Ladies* was given on December 4, with Miss Grumbes directing. Plans for the plays to be given this spring are now under consideration.—*Mary Joan Huber, Secretary.*

Iron River, Mich.

ACAPACITY audience witnessed the performance of *Letters to Lucerne* early in December at the Iron River High School (Thespian Troupe No. 475). The production, directed by Miss Evelyn Nyren, was acclaimed one of the best of recent years at this school, with its strongest appeal in the plot and the fact that the play is timely. The Christmas

Plays for Now

THREE-ACT COMEDIES

SKY ROAD, by N. Richard Nusbaum. 6 m., 9 w. What could have greater appeal during these stirring days than a play about aviators? **SKY ROAD** provides the maximum of audience enjoyment.

A VOICE IN THE DARK, by Jean Provenge. 5 m., 5 w. Paul Revere, recently characterized in a graphic novel, well deserves to be portrayed on the stage, along with that great Revolutionary figure, Samuel Adams. **A VOICE IN THE DARK** is highly entertaining, besides being an expression of true Americanism in tune with the times.

PLANE CRAZY, by Dorothy Rood Stewart. 8 m., 13 w. (5 m., 7 w. carry the principal roles). Here is one of our leaders for the season—human, gay, patriotic in the most desirable meaning of the word.

THE VERY LIGHT BRIGADE, by Kathryn Prather. 8 m., 7 w. Good opportunity to add many extra girls if desired. An up-to-the-hour comedy of action, hilarious fun, and not a little common-sense philosophy for wartime. It's a hit!

MIDNIGHT, by Glenn Hughes. 7 m., 6 w. A mystery play without hokum, but with a twist at the end that brings it right into the war picture as it relates to the F.B.I. here at home. A "natural" for high schools.

RELATIVES BY AFFECTION, by Robert St. Clair. 8 m., 7 w. A clever comedy that is especially appropriate because it brings into focus the current relationship between the United States and China. This play recently played to 5,320 persons at St. Mel High School, Chicago, during four performances.

SHOWDOWN AT SAWTOOTH, by E. Clayton McCarty. 5 m., 4 w. **SHOWDOWN** (abbreviated in title thus by some directors, and perhaps with good judgment) is a new sort of mystery-comedy with a contemporary slant—for it deals with the capture of a Fifth Columnist who would have wrecked one of Uncle Sam's newest-type bombers against the jagged top of Old Sawtooth. A swell play to double-cast, since the player requirements are relatively small.

FUN FOR EVERYBODY

DOUBLE EXPOSURE, by Charles Quimby Burdette. 5 m., 8 w. A farce-comedy that really rings the bell. Exactly the type of play that audiences are currently flocking to.

SPRING FEVER, by Glenn Hughes. 6 m., 6 w. A perennial favorite, spanning the years from junior high school to college. If there is an actor-proof play, this is it.

GOOD NIGHT, LADIES, by Edwin S. Day. 5 m., 7 w. A very easy play to produce, a little shorter than some, but jammed with laugh situations that make up for it.

GHOST WANTED, by Guernsey Le Pelley. 5 m., 5 w. A mystery-comedy with heavy accents on both the mystery and the comedy. The plot has a timely twist to add to its effectiveness.

FOOT-LOOSE, by Charles Quimby Burdette. 7 m., 7 w. As proved by interested "clockers," this breezy comedy of family adventures produces as many laughs as the best farces, and in addition, pleases those who want something to think about.

AND A LOT MORE . . .

To list only a few winners: **SUSPENSE** (7 m., 6 w.); **CROSS MY HEART** (6 m., 7 w.); **THE EYES OF TLALOC** (7 m., 5 w.); **HEADED FOR EDEN** (7 m., 10 w.); **NEW FIRES** (6 m., 9 w.); **ONCE AND FOR ALL** (8 m., 11 w.);

ONE WILD NIGHT (8 m., 9 w.); **REMEMBER THE DAY** (13 m., 12 w.); **SECOND FIDDLE** (3 m., 6 w.); **SHIRT SLEEVES** (9 m., 9 w.); **WHO IS MRS. CHIMPSIE?** (4 m., 6 w.)

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Scene from the production of *Tangled Yarn* at the Postville, Iowa, High School. (Troupe No. 294.) Directed by Miss Iola Darzes. (Reading from left to right: Thespians Clifton Mitchell, Mary Cahlahan and Shirley Olson.)

season was observed with a performance of *A Christmas Star For Olga*, also directed by Miss Nyren. Several plays are under consideration for the spring production schedule.

Pontiac, Mich.

ENTHUSIASTIC capacity crowds filled the Pontiac High School (Thespian Troupe No. 499) auditorium for the performances of *The Lovely Duckling* on December 2, 3, 4, with Mr. W. N. Viola directing. This production opened the season of major plays at this school. Among those who played leading roles in the performances were: Betty Fields, Margaret Varney, Leonard Day, Bud Sudborough, Tom Baytarian, and Corine Lamb.

Polson, Mont.

"OUR program for this season is well under way," writes Miss Lillian G. Brown, troupe sponsor at the Polson High School. "We are glad to report that we are at work in our rebuilt auditorium and are rapidly replacing equipment lost in last year's fire. We have a larger stage, better lighting equipment, and regular school periods for our work. Our first play of the season, *Ever Since Eve*, given in November, was a success. In order to permit all available boys to turn out for football, the girls built the entire set for this play. Our second play of the season, *Ghost Wanted*, was given in January. Early in December our Troupe sent letters and

Christmas boxes to all its members in the armed forces."

Middletown, N. Y.

AN unusually successful production of the three-act comedy, *Ever Since Eve*, was given in November by members of Troupe No. 74 at the Middletown High School, with Mr. Miles S. McLain as director. Two performances were given. The second performance brought the first full house in the history of dramatics at this school. Part of the proceeds were used to purchase motion picture equipment and the balance was contributed to the Stage Door Canteen Fund.—Betty Morgan, Secretary.

York, Pa.

SPONSOR Leon C. Miller of Troupe No. 520 served as general director for the production, *Wanted: A Man*, at the William Penn High School. Performances were given on December 4, 5, with a large number of students participating. Charles Martin, a two-star Thespian, was student director. The first major play of this season, *Sixteen in August*, was also given under Mr. Miller's direction on November 6. The production was given as the 1944 Class play. An impressive Thespian ceremony was held in January. Mr. Miller reports an unusually active dramatics program for this season, with many students participating in the program.

THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN

National Drama Week Observance

MEMBERS of Troupe No. 226, with Miss Lillie Mae Bauer directing, sponsored a successful series of events in observance of National Drama Week, February 7 through 14. Activities for the Week were as follows:

Sunday, Feb. 7, Radio broadcast over local Station.

Monday, Feb. 8, Performance of one-act play before meeting of Daughters of American Revolution, at 2:00 P. M.

Monday, Feb. 8, Performance in the evening of program of four one-act plays: *Bird's Eye View of Mabel* (Freshmen), *Sham* (Sophomores), *Birthday Greetings* (Thespians), *The Ravelled Sleeve of Care* (Thespians).

Tuesday, Feb. 9, Repeat performance of *Birthday Greetings* before Kiwanis Club.

Friday, Feb. 12, Assembly play, *Land of the Free*.

Greenwich, Conn.

MISS MADGE VEST, dramatics director and Thespian Sponsor at the Greenwich High School, reports that her department is taking a leading role in promoting the work of the Victory Corps program within the school. Through the Radio Workshop conducted by the Speech Department under Miss Vest's direction, a series of broadcasts was given during the fall semester over Station WSRR of Stamford, Conn. These broadcasts were designed to inform the public concerning the activities of the Victory Corps. All scripts for the broadcast were prepared by the staff and students of the school. Plans for the major spring productions are now under consideration.

Birmingham, Ala.

THE semi-annual banquet for members of Troupe No. 258 at the Ensley High School was held on January 5, with Frances Waite as mistress of ceremonies. The evening's program was centered around the Roman god, Janus. At the conclusion of the festivities, officers for the spring semester were elected as follows: Grace Jones, president; Jacqueline Jones, vice president; Billy Gannard, recording secretary; Anne Shoemaker, corresponding secretary; James Ray Watson, usher. Grace Jones was elected Best Thespian for the fall semester. National Drama Week in February was celebrated with the performances of two one-act plays. Miss Florence Pass directs dramatics and Thespian activities.—*Barbara Harris, Corresponding Secretary.*

Kansas City, Kansas

DRAMATICS at the Wyandotte High School (Thespian Troupe No. 162) got under way on October 22 with the production of the three-act play, *House of Horrors*, staged by the Kay Cees Pep Club. The second major play of the season, *The American Way*, was Senior Class sponsoring the production. Both plays were directed by Mr. Angus Springer, performed on December 8, 9, 10, with the troupe sponsor. The fall term also included the production of the one-act play, *Dust of the Road*, by Thespians, and the production of *Four Parts in Five Acts* by the Vocal Department. A total of thirty one-act plays were given by the English classes. The spring semester opened with the Junior Class play, *Seven Sisters*, staged on February 17, 18. The next major production, *Under the Gaslights*, will be staged by Thespians on April 1, 2. It is clear from this busy schedule that a vigorous dramatics program is in progress this season under Mr. Springer's direction.

★ Contributions to the Stage Door ★ Canteen Fund

as of February 15, 1943

Troupe No. 187, Brownsville, Pa., Senior High School, Jean A. Donahey, Sponsor.....	\$30.00
Troupe No. 308, Darien, Conn., High School, Ella Pettersson, Sponsor.....	10.00
Troupe No. 84, Princeton, W. Va., High School, Irene Norris, Sponsor.....	2.80
Troupe No. 189, Magnolia High School, Matewan, W. Va., Kathryn Talbert, Sponsor.....	14.50
Troupe No. 156, Revere, Mass., High School, Emily L. Mitchell, June Hamblin, Co-sponsors	5.00
Troupe No. 17, Aurora High School, Aurora, Neb., Loine Gaines, Sponsor.....	10.00
Troupe No. 133, Shenandoah, Iowa, High School, May Virden, Sponsor.....	2.50
Troupe No. 1, Natrona Co., High School, Casper, Wyo., J. J. Cline, Sponsor.....	10.00
Troupe No. 140, Nuttall High School, Lookout, W. Va., Mrs. Eva L. Crosby, Sponsor.....	14.00
Troupe No. 75, Union High School, Milwaukie, Ore., Miss Grayce Oliver, Sponsor.....	25.00
Troupe No. 235, Ellenville, N. Y., High School, Miss Mary E. Brodbeck, Sponsor.....	5.00
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Troupe No. 125, Wetumpka, Ala., High School, Mrs. Austin Bridges, Sponsor.....	10.00
Troupe No. 406, Union County High School, Erwin, Tenn., Mrs. L. H. Allred, Sponsor	25.00
Troupe No. 126, Alton, Ill., Senior High School, Miss Mildred Rutledge, Sponsor.....	64.52
Troupe No. 240, Lubbock, Texas, High School, Mrs. Marie Gabriel, Sponsor.....	3.00
Troupe No. 164, Maryville, Tenn., High School, Miss Alberta B. Coventry, Sponsor.....	25.00
Troupe No. 81, Alamogordo, N. Mex., High School, Miss Edith L. Welsheimer, Sponsor	5.00
Troupe No. 311, Lancaster, N. H., High School, Mrs. Gertrude R. McGoff, Sponsor.....	5.00
Troupe No. 469, Wenatchee, Wash., High School, Miss Grace Gorton, Sponsor.....	110.17
Troupe No. 301, Marked Tree, Ark., High School, Miss Marie Thost Pierce, Sponsor..	2.50
Troupe No. 146, Pekin, Ill., Community High School, Miss Melba Reid, Sponsor.....	30.00
Troupe No. 172, Arkadelphia, Ark., High School, Mrs. R. B. Thomas, Sponsor.....	10.00
Troupe No. 432, Dobyns-Bennet High School, Kingsport, Tenn., Miss Nancy C. Wylie,	
Sponsor.....	81.00
Troupe No. 210, Topeka, Kansas, High School, Miss Gertrude S. Wheeler, Sponsor....	25.00
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Sponsor.....	16.00
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Troupe No. 177, Orlando, Fla., High School, Miss Mildred E. Murphy, Sponsor.....	2.00
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Troupe No. 242, Edgemont, S. Dak., High School, Mr. Ernie A. Moeller, Sponsor.....	4.76
Troupe No. 74, Middletown, N. Y., High School, Mr. Miles S. McClain, Sponsor.....	5.00
Troupe No. 334, Chardon, Ohio, High School, Mr. Ira A. Canfield, Sponsor.....	100.00
Troupe No. 204, Welch, W. Va., High School, Miss Eleanore E. Reed, Sponsor.....	30.00
Troupe No. 230, Cumberland, Md., Fort Hill High School, Miss Geraldine Pritchard,	
Sponsor.....	15.00
Troupe No. 149, Paragould, Ark., High School, Mrs. W. J. Stone, Sponsor.....	13.00
Troupe No. 336, Winslow, Ariz., High School, Mrs. Kathleen Kerlin Curry, Sponsor....	3.00
Troupe No. 482, Logan, Iowa, High School, Miss Genevieve Huber, Sponsor.....	5.00
Troupe No. 14, New Kensington, Pa., High School, Mrs. Alice C. Klinke, Sponsor.....	15.00
Troupe No. 206, Elkhorn High School, Switchback, W. Va., Miss Gertrude E. Skaggs,	
Sponsor.....	1.00
Troupe No. 425, Tucson, Ariz., High School, Miss Lillian Cavett, Sponsor.....	15.00
Troupe No. 41, Glen Cove, N. Y., High School, Miss Rosemary Cahill, Sponsor.....	10.00
Roosevelt High School, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Miss Robert D. Sheets, Director.....	5.00
Troupe No. 264, Central High School, Parkersburg, W. Va., Miss Edith L. Humphrey,	
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(Continued on page 24)

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(Continued from page 23)

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Troupe No. 428, Cumberland Co. High School, Crossville, Tenn., <i>Miss Ethel W. Walker, Sponsor</i>	5.00
Troupe No. 108, Kenmore High School, Kenmore, N. Y., <i>Miss Eve Strong, Sponsor</i>	10.00
Troupe No. 540, New England, N. Dak., High School, <i>Mr. Gerhard W. Thompson, Sponsor</i>	5.00
Troupe No. 371, Seton High School, Cincinnati, Ohio, <i>Sister Marie Palmyre, Sponsor</i>	5.00
Troupe No. 53, Albion, Mich., High School, <i>Leitha V. Perkins, Sponsor</i>	2.00
Troupe No. 192, Keokuk, Ia., High School, <i>Franklin D. Stone, Sponsor</i>	5.00
Troupe No. 530, Mount St. Joseph, Ohio, Academy, <i>Sister Carita, Sponsor</i>	5.25
Troupe No. 27, Morgantown, W. Va., High School, <i>Dorothy Stone White, Sponsor</i>	25.00
Troupe No. 364, Jamestown, N. Y., High School, <i>Myrtle L. Paetznick, Sponsor</i>	78.79
Troupe No. 497, Minerva, Ohio, High School, <i>Donald L. Barbe, Sponsor</i>	20.00
Troupe No. 381, Cripple Creek, Colo., High School, <i>Helen C. Sawers, Sponsor</i>	1.00
Troupe No. 83, Lemmon, S. Dak., High School, <i>Helen C. Movius, Sponsor</i>	15.00
Troupe No. 199, Williams, Arizona, High School, <i>Aileen Klass, Sponsor</i>	10.00
Troupe No. 401, Berea, Ky., Academy, <i>Earl W. Blank, Sponsor</i>	1.50
Troupe No. 21, Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, Ind., <i>Elsie B. Ball, Sponsor</i>	5.00
Troupe No. 34, Fairview, W. Va., High School, <i>Mary Sturm, Sponsor</i>	10.00
Troupe No. 284, Philippi, West Va., High School, <i>Frances Nucci, Sponsor</i>	10.00
Troupe No. 462, Madera, Calif., Union High School, <i>Miss Mary Scott, Sponsor</i>	2.50
Troupe No. 186, Memphis, Tenn., Messick High School, <i>Mrs. Lottye K. McCall, Sponsor</i>	10.57
Total contributions	\$1,624.77

(NOTE: The National Thespian Society has been designated as the collecting agency for high school contributions to the Stage Door Canteen Fund of the American Theatre Wing for War Service. All high schools are urged to contribute to this worthy cause. Contributions should be addressed to College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

Tucson, Ariz.

THE first Thespian initiation of this season at the Tucson Senior High School was held on December 16 under the general direction of Miss Lillian Cavett, dramatics director. Eleven students were given membership at the ceremony, preceded by the performances of two one-act plays, *Jacob Comes Home* and *Frederick*. "Our presentation of *Time Is Short* over Station KTUC on December 10 was a great success," reports Miss Cavett. Activities for the spring semester are now well advanced.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

MAJOR dramatics productions at the Roosevelt High School so far this season are *Letters to Lucerne* and *Romances by Emma*, both staged under the general direction of Miss Roberta D. Sheets. The third play of the year, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, will be given this spring. At the time of this writing, members of the dramatics club were considering the question of affiliating with the National Thespian Society. Miss Sheets is an active member of the National Play Revision Council, which has for its purpose the "defrosting" of the classics for high school productions.

Montrose, Colo.

THE production of the one-act patriotic plays, *For the Want of a Nail* and *Mother Buys a Bond*, were among the contributions to the war effort during the fall semester at Montrose County High School. The plays were given under the joint sponsorship of the dramatics club and Thespian Troupe No. 383, with Miss Anne Copeland as sponsor. The major play of the term, *China Boy*, was given by the Junior Class. The first Thespian initiation of the year was held on January 11 with ten students receiving the membership pledge under Miss Copeland's direction. — Gerree Gleason, Secretary.

"Forward, MARCH!"

Every soldier knows what he is expected to do when his officer commands, "Forward, March." Uncle Sam is giving you a similar command. See that your dramatics group is enlisted as a contributor to the High School Theater For Victory Program. You will find more details on page 1.

Edgemont, S. Dak.

THE Junior Class production of *June Mad*, December 11, opened the season of full-length plays at the Edgemont High School (Troupe No. 242), with Mr. Erne A. Moeller directing. The fall term also included the production of *Junket For the Junkman* and *The Valiant*, sponsored by Thespians and presented before the student body. The second major play of the year is tentatively scheduled for production in March under Mr. Moeller's direction. — Edward Tubbs, Secretary.

Jackson, Mich.

THE formal initiation of Thespian Troupe No. 541 was held at the St. Mary High School on January 25, with Miss Claire C. Cook as founder and sponsor of the club. An impressive and dignified ceremony was held in the presence of the entire student body. Members of the faculty and patrons of the school were present. The following students were admitted as charter members: Jean Baughman, Robert Deschaine, Robert Diffenderfer, Suzanne Fiero, Jean Gerding, Nanette Grindall, Jacqueline Hertler, Robert Kempf, Loretta Miller, Rita Miller, Joanne Russell, Rosemary Russell, Robert Phebus, Evelyn Putra, Yolanda Serianni, Connie Schonhard, John Sullivan, Marilyn Tighe, Ann Tobin, Tommy Williams and William Tappenden. Miss Cook writes that her troupe has already undertaken a busy dramatics schedule for this spring.

Youngstown, Ohio

THESPIAN Troupe No. 479 of the Rayen High School reports the production of *Swing Fever* on November 19 as the first full-length play of the current season, with Miss Lucille Lee as director. Thespians and the dramatics class gave performances of *Bird's Christmas Carol* on December 16, 17, before the student body. The same groups were joint sponsors of a pageant, *Lady of the Crossroads*,

THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN

TO MAKE THEM LAUGH

The Ghost of Mr. Penny

By Rosemary G. Musil

A mystery play, with highlights of irresistible comedy. Plays about two hours, needs two sets, and eight characters.

A little girl named Sally, whose parentage is unknown, is dismayed to learn that she must go to an orphan asylum. Putting on a brave front, she joins her friends for a last romp in the abandoned stable of the old Penny estate. In the stable, the children discover a jolly and easy-going tramp, who has climbed in there to spend the night. Sally's nimble imagination at once conceives him to be the long-lost Mr. Penny, and with the aid of a little circumstantial evidence, she soon persuades her friends to accept him as Mr. Penny too.

Late that night, they all creep into the big old Penny house, to help "Mr. Penny" recover the hidden treasure with which Sally's imagination has provided him. There follows a highly comical scene, in which the custodian of the house thinks the children are ghosts, the children think the tramp is a ghost, the owner of the house thinks the slightest noise is a ghost, and unexpected occurrences make everybody's hair stand on end.

They find no treasure, but "Mr. Penny" finds a paper establishing Sally's family connections, and proving her legitimate heir to the Penny estate. And the next morning, when Sally is about to be taken off to the orphan asylum, it is "Mr. Penny" who saves the day.

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staged early in December. Thespians celebrated the Christmas Season with a party given in honor of alumni members of the troupe at the home of Madeline Litman.—*Madeline Litman, Secretary.*

Providence, R. I.

THESPIAN Troupe No. 528 was officially installed on November 19 at the Classical High School, with Mrs. Emile S. Piche as founder and sponsor. An impressive induction ceremony was held before the entire Classical Dramatics Society and its guests. Participating in the ceremony were members of Troupe No. 254 of the B. M. C. Durfee High School of Fall River, Massachusetts, under the direc-

tion of Miss Barbara Wellington. The troupe adopted "Classical Thespians" as its official name. The Thespian pledge was given to the following charter members: Virginia Pierce, president of the troupe; Sally McDevitt, troupe vice-president; Frances Goldin, secretary; Lenore Mistowsky, treasurer; Joan Todd, historian; John Hall, reporter; Raymond Scunzio, John Chiaverini, Charles Lough, Judith Korey, Mathilde Gettegno, Rosella Jagonlinzer, Janice Miller, Diane Phillips, Richard Wise, Michael Salerno, Joseph Piche, Max Bloom, Peggy Dorgan, Peggy Allen and Lorraine Kenny. Mr. Charles E. Paine, Dr. James L. Hanley and Mr. Benjamin were granted honorary membership in the troupe. As its

first major dramatics project, Troupe No. 528 took under consideration the production of the popular play, *Out of the Frying Pan*, for this spring. Dramatics work is somewhat handicapped because of the lack of adequate stage facilities, but the group is determined to accomplish much before the season is closed.

Cumberland, Md.

MISS GERARDINE PRITCHARD reports the following activities for her Thespian Troupe No. 230 at the Fort Hill High School since the opening of school in the fall: Induction of new members, daily club program with time being devoted to the study of in-



Scene from the comedy, *Spring Fever*, as staged by members of Troupe No. 230 at the Fort Hill High School, Cumberland, Md. The play was directed by Miss Gerardine Pritchard.

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No. 3 Felt Letter:

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Initiation ceremony at the Classical High School of Providence, R. I. Mrs. Emilie S. Piche (center left) is founder and sponsor. At the right are members of Troupe No. 254 of the B. M. C. Durfee High School, Fall River, Mass., present for the installation ceremony. Miss Barbara Wellington of the Fall River Troupe is seen at center right.

terpretation, one-act plays, and other matters in conducting a school play tournament, production of a patriotic pageant, *If He Could Speak*, by the Choral Speaking Club, the radio play, *Time Is Short*, production of the three-act play, *Spring Fever*, in December, and a variety of other smaller projects designed to promote the dramatics program within the school. "With many activities still to be accomplished, our Thespians will have a busy and profitable second semester," concludes Miss Pritchard.

Idaho Falls, Idaho

WORTHY of being called one of the finest Junior Class plays was the production of *Double Door* given in January at the Idaho Falls High School (Thespian Troupe No. 480), with Mr. Elmer S. Crowley directing. The audience was more than pleased with a thoroughly convincing performance given by the players, with Norma Poole playing the role of Victoria Van Bret. Other leading players included Elizabeth Poitevin, Pete Stavros and Geneva Ferguson. Much interest was added to the performance by a letter written to the cast by Miss Elizabeth McFadden, author of *Double Door*. Troupe No. 480 is extremely busy this spring under Mr. Crowley's direction.

Liberty, N. Y.

THE production of the Senior Class play, *The Ghost Train*, on November 24, marked the opening of the current dramatics season for students of the Liberty High School (Thespian Troupe No. 109). Miss Ethel R. Rice, troupe sponsor, directed. The second major play of this season, *Ever Since Eve*, will be given in March under the sponsorship of the Junior Class. Thespians will close the year with their production of a full-length play in May. The Christmas Season was observed with performances of *Christmas Trimmings*, *Under the Christmas Tree* and *Never Trust a Man*. Thespians are planning to exchange a program of one-act plays this spring with a neighboring high school. The first Thespian initiation of the year was held in February.

Milwaukie, Ore.

WITH Miss Kay Walters directing, the Senior Class gave *A Connecticut Yankee* on December 11 as the first major play of this season at the Milwaukie High School (Troupe No. 75). Thespians followed on February 25 with a program of three one-act plays, *The Flower Shop*, *Sunset Becomes Rhythm* and *The Woman in the Freight Car*, with net proceeds given to the Stage Door Canteen Fund. National Drama Week in February was observed with the presentation of a patriotic program sponsored by Thespians. Miss

Grayce Oliver has general direction of dramatics and Thespian activities.—*Nina Maxwell, Secretary.*

Dover, Del.

ACTIVITIES of the dramatics club (Troupe No. 489) of the Dover Community High School, with Mrs. Myrtle Cole Cabbage as sponsor, began with the Thanksgiving one-act play, *Enter Women*, given before the student body assembly. On November 19, 20, followed the playlet, *Mother Buys a Bond*, given in the city theatre in connection with a bond sale drive. The Christmas season was observed with a Candlelight Service by the Music Department and the production of the one-act play, *Christmas Destiny*, staged in the Field House for the student body and the community. On January 15, seven new members were added to the troupe. The ceremony included an illustrated lecture on the Greek theatre, given by Mr. Henry, and the production of the war play, *Time Is Short*. The ceremony was given before the entire student body. At the time of this writing, three one-act plays, *Sham*, *Where the Cross Is Made* and *Ten Minutes by the Clock*, were in production. The production of a full-length play will be the major dramatic event of this spring, with Mrs. Cabbage directing.

Winston-Salem, N. C.

THESPIAN Troupe No. 535 was formally installed at the Carver High School with an impressive and dignified ceremony held on December 17, with Mrs. G. H. Fitch as director and sponsor. Preceding the ceremony, a number of dramatics readings and songs were presented by students. The Rev. I. Logan Kearse was introduced by Mrs. Fitch as the guest speaker. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Mr. E. E. Hill, principal, spoke briefly. Dramatics students who took the Thespian pledge as charter members were: Cornelia Flint, Alice Evans, Ruby Johnson, Willie Gray Williams, Gwendolyn Friende, Gladys Smith, Jessie Jones and Pauline Revels. The program closed with the singing of the national anthem. Troupe No. 535 enjoys the distinction of being the first Thespian club to be established in a negro high school. Mrs. Fitch sponsored a lively dramatics group at the Kimball (W. Va.) High School before accepting her present position. National Drama Week, early in February, was observed with the presentation of a patriotic program, with the net proceeds given to the Stage Door Canteen Fund.

Harrisburg, Pa.

DRAMATICS pupils of the John Harris High School (Troupe No. 503) presented two successful performances of the comedy, *Three Live Ghosts*, on November 19, 20, with

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"IT'S A GREAT LIFE"

3 act Farce

5 m., 6 w.

By William D. Fisher. Here is another ideal play for any school, regardless of size, that likes gay, light fun wrapped in a plot as delightful as the characters who enact it. The play is done in a single, simple interior and a bare handful of properties. Highly recommended.

You'll like the Wilsons, for even though their life may be more complicated and more humorous than yours, they might be the people down the block or around the corner. There's henpecked Mr. Wilson, interested in dramatics, ruled by the unbending hand of his wife and sister-in-law. And Tommy Wilson, who, with his pal, Ted, sympathizes heartily with his Dad's position. And Mary Wilson, also under the domination of her aunt and Mother, not to mention her chum, Marie; Marie's secret-sweetheart, Wilbert Wiggins; and the local wrestler, "Muscles" O'Rourke. But that isn't all, for a full evening of fun unfolds when Mrs. Wilson and Aunt Gertrude connive to have Mary take Wilbert Wiggins to the local dance in place of her regular escort for the evening. But when Tommy, Ted, and Mr. Wilson, unknown to each other, all arrange dates for her, the situation becomes complicated. Tommy and Ted finally hit upon the plan of having Tommy impersonate a woman to attend the dance with "Muscles," so that he won't become angry. Situation piles upon situation, until a satisfactory outcome is almost unbelievable. With no production difficulties at all, and filled with humorous action and rapid clever dialogue, "IT'S A GREAT LIFE," will make any audience gleefully shout "WHATTA MIXUP." We recommend it unreservedly as the ideal play for your SPRING PRODUCTION—THE PLAY OF THE YEAR.

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Mrs. Parmelia Rose Emanuel directing. Student directors for the production were Lorna Boland, Doris Blessing, Mary Curry and Dixon Davis. Mr. Ralf L. Neigh of the faculty acted as stage manager, while Miss Dorothy P. Martin had charge of costumes. Early in January a group of sixteen students were admitted to Thespian membership under Mrs. Emanuel's direction.—*Boyde Stine, Secretary.*

Lawrence, Kansas

THE three-act comedy, *Tangled Yarn*, was given in February as the first major production of the spring semester at the Liberty Memorial High School. Members of Thespian Troupe No. 157, with Miss Norma Parry as

sponsor, took leading parts in the successful performance.

Elmhurst, Ill.

DRAMATICS activities at York Community High School (Troupe No. 94) began last fall with the presentation of *Our Town* by the Senior Class. Many of the cast and participants were Thespians. The next production was *Pirates of Penzance*, given by the music and dramatics departments early in November. Later in the month Thespians gave a pot luck dinner in honor of all new members. On December 17, the date set for Drama Night, Thespians presented three one-act plays: *Blackout*, by Margaret M. Paine; *The Pie and*

the Tart, by M. Jagendorf, and *The Adoration*, by F. Wilmot. Dean Morgan, president of Thespians at York, enlisted in the Navy and left shortly after Christmas. He is one of the first York students to leave. During the months of January, February and March no club meetings will be held in the school after school hours, due to fuel rationing. Therefore, Thespians will have no more scheduled meetings until April. All dramatics activities at York are directed by Miss Doris E. White.—*Jean Pallock, Secretary.*

Fort Benton, Mont.

UNDER the capable leadership of Miss Mildred Gover, new interest in dramatics



Scene from Goldsmith's famous play, *She Stoops To Conquer*. A production of Troupe No. 225, Lincoln, Ill., Community High School. Mr. Lloyd E. Roberts, director. (Staged during the 1941-42 season.)

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FLIGHT OF THE HERONS—by Marietta Conway Kennard. A famous contest winning drama. Price, 50c. Royalty, \$10.00.

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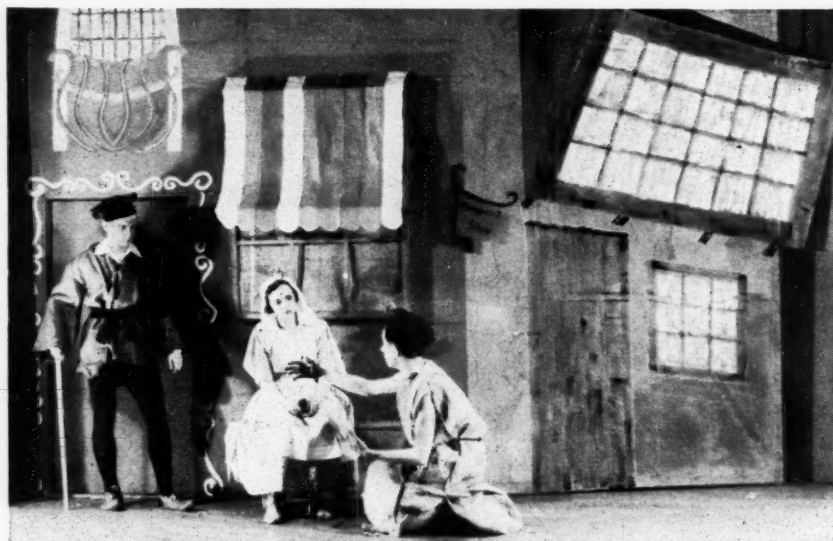
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Scene from the annual Thespian program of one-act plays at the York Community High School, Elmhurst, Ill. This is from the one-act play, *The Pie and the Tart*. Directed by Miss Doris E. White.

is being developed at the Fort Benton High School (Thespian Troupe No. 195). The season's production schedule began with the Armistice Day play, *It's A Beautiful Day in America*. On December 4 the Senior Class followed with a successful performance of the comedy, *Ever Since Eve*. In January, Thespians presented an evening of three one-act plays, *The Valiant*, *Sham*, and *Antic Spring*, with part of the proceeds given to the Stage Door Canteen Fund. Early in November a group of nine students were admitted to Thespian membership. The spring schedule calls for additional dramatics projects.—*Bobby Van Horn, Secretary*.

Madison, S. Dak.

SEVEN new members were admitted to membership in Troupe No. 302 at the Central High School on January 25. The induction ceremony was under the direction of Miss Mabel Phelps, troupe sponsor and dramatics director. The production season so far this year has included the Senior Class play, *Ever Since Eve*, given in November, and the two one-acts, *Elmer* and *Now Don't Laugh*, staged for the

Thespian Song

By Donald Cerulli, Member of Troupe 156,
Revere, Mass., High School
(Tune: Bless Them All)

Thespians, Thespians,
Put your heart and your soul in your act.
Keep up your courage along with your chin,
When going gets tough just keep up with a grin,
For with loyalty, teamwork to love,
We will shine from all others above,
So down with your sorrows and win well-earned laurels
And you'll be a true Thespian.

Thespians, Thespians,
We have plenty to learn and to gain.
We may get praises that may seem to soothe,
Don't heed them too much, you can always improve
For to go on, rejecting defeat,
Is the joy that makes our work complete,
Just hand us a story, and we're in our glory,
So let us go on, Thespians.

Justify Your Existence

Dramatics groups are now being asked to justify their existence in wartime. This you can and must do, if you believe in what you are doing. Your first step is to enlist your group in the High School For Victory Program. See page 1.

student assembly. Bob Wadden is troupe president, with Laurel Caldwell as vice president, and Maxine Westall as secretary-treasurer.

Kingsport, Tenn.

ACTIVITIES during National Drama Week, February 7-14, at the Dobyns Bennett High School (Thespian Troupe No. 432) began with the assembly play, *The Left Jab*. This was followed with a broadcast of the play, *Romeo Rides Again*, over the local radio station. A second radio play followed later in the week. All dramatics activities are under the direction of Miss Nancy C. Wylie, troupe sponsor.

Meridian, Miss.

THE first formal Thespian initiation of the season was held by Troupe No. 134 of the Meridian High School (lower division) on the morning of January 1. The impressive and solemn ceremony was held before the faculty and student body, with thirty-two members participating. The program was under the direction of Miss Lois Stewart, troupe sponsor and director of dramatics. The major dramatic event of the fall semester was the production of the three-act comedy, *You Can't Take It With You*, directed by Miss Stewart.—*Betty Jeanne Ellison, Secretary*.

Rockland, Me.

THE current season of long plays got under way on December 7 at the Rockland High School (Troupe No. 431) with the production of *June Mad*, given by the Senior Class. A second performance was given on December 8. The second major play, *Showdown At Sawtooth*, will be presented on March 3, 4, under the auspices of the Junior Class. Thespian activities for the season include the production of the one-act play, *Junket For the Junkman*, presented at a club meeting. All dramatics projects are under the general direction of Mr. Alston E. Smith.—*Virginia R. Foster, Secretary*.

THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN

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What's New Among Books and Plays

EDITED BY MRS. HARRISON J. MERRILL

Review Staff: Blandford Jennings, Marion Stuart, Kari Natalie Reed, Elmer S. Crowley, Mary Ella Bovee, Helen Movius, Rachel McCarty, Beulah B. Bayless, E. E. Strong

Reviews appearing in this department aim to help our readers keep up with recent books and plays. The opinions expressed are those of the reviewer only. Mention of a book or play in this department does not necessarily mean that such a publication is recommended by THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN.

Walter H. Baker Co., 178 Tremont Street, Boston, Mass.

This Freedom, a patriotic pageant drama, by Elliott Field. Purchase of eight copies required. This pageant provides ideal material for a school program designed to emphasize how we obtained our freedom and what freedom is. Twelve episodes present various aspects of freedom, with particular emphasis placed upon such timely topics as freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech. The speeches of the narrator are clear and well chosen. Choral speeches also add to the effectiveness of the pageant. The music gives added background to the spoken parts. This pageant should prove idea for graduation week. Parts are provided for a large number of students. Highly recommended.—*Ernest Bavely*.

V For Victory, a collection of 33 different readings, orations, pageants, minstrels, and short plays, compiled by Rehn Scarborough. With the exception of about three of the longest pageants and minstrels, the material in this book is intended for junior high students. Included are such titles as: *After the Air Raid*, *The Man Without a Country*, *America's Heritage of Song*, etc. The chief criticism of this collection is its brevity, but where short poems and playlets are desired for assembly programs this will prove very acceptable.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

Happy Is The Bride, a comedy in three acts, by Kurtz Gordon. 4 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$10. This play shows how both mothers-in-law almost wreck the marriage of their newly-wed children in less than a year. How they solve their difficulties brings the play to a swift close. Easy to produce. Witty dialogue and good characterization.—*Lillie Mae Bauer*.

Aunt Lulu From Honolulu, an American comedy in three acts, by Henry Rowland. 4 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$10. Aunt Lulu, with rapid strides, turns the indolent, un-American family of her sister into a patriotic, war-minded group and also reforms their friends. The situations are exciting, characters contrasting, dialogue smooth, easy for high schools.—*Lillie Mae Bauer*.

Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

And Came the Spring, a comedy of modern youth in three acts, by Marjane and Joseph Hayes. 9 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$25. This is a notable addition to that series of plays about youth written during the past decade. In their treatment of the plot and the characters—thoroughly plausible figures—the authors have succeeded in giving us a play that will delight, first, the director who is looking for worthwhile material; second, the young actors who seek opportunities for genuine acting, and third, the audience which always welcomes stories about the problems and tribulations of youth. The large cast provides the answer to the recurring problem of finding a suitable class play. Directors will find in this play much to elevate standards in the high school theatre.—*Ernest Bavely*.

Ring Around Elizabeth, a comedy in three acts, by Charl Armstrong. 5 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$25. This play centers around Elizabeth, mother of an unappreciative family and victim of an irritating household. Unable to stand it any longer, Elizabeth conveniently contracts amnesia in which the twenty years of her married life are blotted out. Before gaining her normal

state of mind she effects many changes. The play calls for rather mature characterization, but it is within the range of high school groups.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

Spider Island, a melodrama in three acts. 6 w., 1 m. Royalty, \$10. In this play a tale of horror is told about two spinsters with a hired girl who live in an abandoned lighthouse situated on Spider Island, six miles from shore. A niece of the spinsters, who has inherited the island, with a friend, come to claim it without knowing any of the circumstances which surround it. An inhabitant of the town, plus an axe, plunge the inhabitants and their visitors into a series of hair-raising events. The suspense is well sustained.—*Mary Sturm*.

I Pledge Allegiance, a play of patriotism in one act, by Basil Ring. 3 m., 5 w. No royalty. This patriotic drama tells of a schoolboy, seemingly indifferent to the war effort, who single-handed, gains the information to round up a gang of enemy aliens plotting to sabotage his father's factory. An inspiring play, depicting the true American spirit.—*Helen C. Movius*.

This Being Young, a comedy in three acts, by Richard Young. 5 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$10. This is Pam Power's play and largely concerns her plans to reach Hollywood. Of course we meet the members of the Powers family, her friend Marge, also a Hollywood worshipper, several romantic young men, her Aunt Phoebe, a doctor, and an actor from South America. Since all of the twelve characters except one is young this play is an admirable choice for high schools. One set. Easy to stage. Actors and audience will enjoy it together.—*Beulah Bayless*.

The Northwestern Press, 2200 Park Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

Victory Home, a comedy in three acts, by Dana Thomas. 6 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$25. This fast-moving comedy will be welcomed by drama groups who want something worth producing during these critical days. The play is particularly easy to stage and yet it challenges the abilities of the average high school cast. About every aspect of the civilian front is mentioned—welcomed contribution to the war program. There is plenty of wholesome romance build around pretty Gale Hargrove and handsome Tony Cravetti, an American soldier of Italian parentage. This play is ideal as a contribution to the "High School Theatre For Victory Program."—*Ernest Bavely*.

Mystery in Blue, a mystery play in three acts, by Wall Spence. 7 m., 9 w. Royalty, \$25. Many strange, sinister, and ghost-like characters drift into the hotel, "Oak Knoll," and conduct themselves most mysteriously to the end of the play or until the mystery is solved. From the spooky knocks, sounds, and the appearance of a blue phantom, the hotel appears to be haunted, but the cause of the excitement is finally found to be a hidden treasure. The entire action takes place in a hotel reception room. No difficult staging.—*Mary Sturm*.

Friday, the 13th, a mystery play in three acts, by Dana Thomas. 6 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$10. This play concerns an attempt on the part of Mrs. Goddard to discover the murderer of her grandson on the first anniversary of his death. Gathered in the pent-house apartment of Robert Whiting are his guests of a year ago, with several additional persons. From there on, the

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Wetmore Declamation Bureau, Sioux City, Iowa.

The Ruggles in the Rear, a comedy in three acts, suggested by some of the characters in Kate Douglas Wiggin's story, *The Bird's Christmas Carol*, by Pauline Phelps. 5 m., 9 w. No royalty, but the purchase of 14 copies is required. The script offered by Miss Phelps is very complete, and it presents familiar and well-loved

characters of an earlier story in new and entertaining situations. The cast is widely varied as to type, to fit any group. The curtain opens on an empty stage, which is dressed up for Acts II and III. The conversation is brisk, with much homely philosophy coming from the tongue of Mrs. Ruggles. This comedy is an especially wise choice for a novice director and organization.—*Mary Ella Boveé*.

Row Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill.

A Hero Is Born, drama in one act, by William Kozlenko. 3 m., 2 w. Royalty quoted on application. A little family living in the mountains of California learn that their son has been killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor. Joel, the younger son, leaves to avenge his brother's death. Stirring and dramatic. Very good.—*Marion Stuart*.

Lift Thine Eyes, Christmas story in one act, by Marion L. Bishop. 8 w. No royalty. Set in an old ladies home, Miss Julia gives the younger Penny O'Dea the courage to go out and live her own young life. Very beautiful story.—*Marion Stuart*.

Net Result, comedy in one act, by Edna C. Culver. 6 m., 1 w. No royalty. Andy, clerk in a corner grocery store, is entrusted with the cash while the proprietor leaves. He is interested in a radio program and lets "Porky" get away with the money. The constable and his assistant take Andy, with the remaining cash, have him handcuffed as Jane, the daughter, brings "Porky" back to receive a box of candy as the audience learns the hold-up was all faked.—*Marion Stuart*.

Lady of the Market Place, Christmas pageant in one act, by Charlotte Lee. 3 m., 13 w. Chorus. No royalty. The story of the birth of Christ is told by a Mexican pageant woman in the market place beneath the statue of the Blessed Virgin. There is a choral background in which the Wise Men and the Angels appear. Very well written. Excellent.—*Marion Stuart*.

Mid-West Play Co., Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

No Greater Love, a serious comedy in one act, by William D. Fisher. 2 m., 3 w. No royalty. The problem of choosing between a career in the city, or the meager salary of a country doctor, challenges the acting ability of all the characters in this play. It has the universal appeal of love and duty triumphant over selfishness and egotism, revealed in a swift moving climax. For advanced casts. Won superior rating in Colorado Festival.—*Lillie Mae Bauer*.

Just Underneath, a drama in one act, by Fremont Varnum. 4 m., 2 w. No royalty. This is a play based on the psychology, that planning a crime produces criminal effects on the character involved. Distinctly a play of mood and atmosphere. A challenge to the actor and director.—*Lillie Mae Bauer*.

The Dramatic Publishing Co., 59 East Van Buren Street, Chicago, Ill.

Best Foot Forward, a three-act comedy, by John Cecil Holm. 10 m., 7 w. Royalty upon application. The boys' dormitory at the Winsor Prep School is the scene of this lively and fast-moving comedy. Into the dormitory, on the eve of the big school dance, comes movie actress Gale Joy. Her appearance, entirely unexpected by all, including shy Bud Hooper who sent her the invitation, causes no end of surprises and complications. Matters are not improved by Dr. Reeber's phobia for order and discipline. You will find this play very stimulating for spring production. It is fresh, light, and extremely easy to stage. The large cast makes it an excellent choice for the senior class play.—*Ernest Bavely*.

Huckleberry Finn, a comedy in three acts, from the book by Samuel Clemens, dramatized by Jane Kendall. 6 m., 8 w., 1 interior. Royalty, maximum \$25; minimum \$5. This is the familiar story of Huck's adventures in bringing to justice the two old rascals, the King and the Duke. All the lovable characters from Aunt Sally to Tom Sawyer are included. Junior high groups will find this play particularly suited to their needs since there is a predominance of youthful characters.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

Kitty Foyle, a comedy in three acts, dramatized from Christopher Morley's novel by Christopher Sergel. 5 m., 8 w., 1 interior. Royalty, \$25. The dramatization of this play varies somewhat from the screen version in which Ginger Rogers played the title role. Kitty Foyle, a girl from an average American family, falls in love with a young aristocrat and overcomes almost insurmountable obstacles in winning him from his family. The fact that Ginger Rogers created such an unforgettable character may limit this play in some communities, while others may find it suitable.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

Pig Of My Dreams, a comedy in one act, by Spranger Barry. 2 m., 3 w., No royalty but producing group must purchase five copies of the play. One simple interior. The play concerns Jimmy, a farmer with a college education, and Jane, his city girl friend. Jane and her parents visit Jimmy at his home and Bernadine, the prize pig, complicates things.—*Kari Natalie Reed*.

A Gown For The Bride, a one act play for an all woman cast, by Anne Coulter Martens. 8 w. No royalty but producing group must purchase eight copies of play. One simple interior. Carla plans to marry for money and so pleases her Mother, but her great aunt Linnie helps her change her mind and she decides to marry for love.—*Kari Natalie Reed*.

Dodd, Mead & Co., 432 Fourth Ave., New York, N. Y.

Plays Of Patriotism For Young Americans, edited by S. Emerson Golden. \$2.50. Mr. Golden has performed an urgently-needed service for amateur directors. In bringing into one volume eighteen patriotic plays, he provides one solution for the ever-increasing demand for material suitable for production during these critical times. The plays are professionally-written and royalty free. Plays for many different occasions make the volume a welcomed possession. Among the titles we found especially good are: *A Guide For George Washington*, *A Reasonable Facsimile*, *Admirable of the Ocean Sea*, *Summer Soldier*, *Simon Bolivar*, *Liberator*, and *An Echo of '76*. High school dramatics directors will find this book a worth while source of material. An excellent buy.—*Ernest Bavely*.

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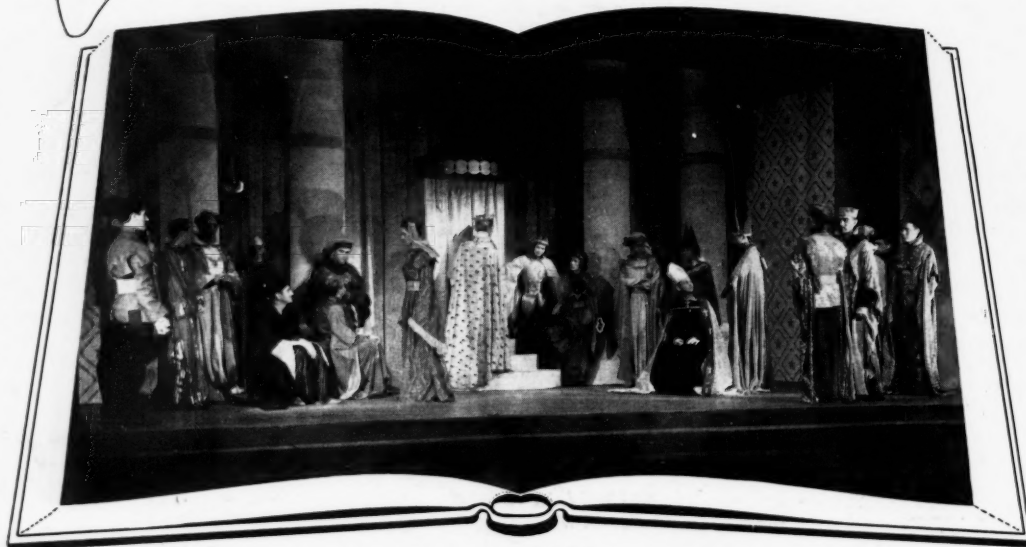
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